


SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 1 – 10)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy

A humble samarpanam to AcAryAs on the grand occasion of

SATAMANA MAHOTSAVAM

for

HH SrImad PaRavAkkOTTai PeriyANDavan

SrI GopAladeSika MahAdeSikan

(Sarvari samvatsara Panguni-Rohini)

Sri:



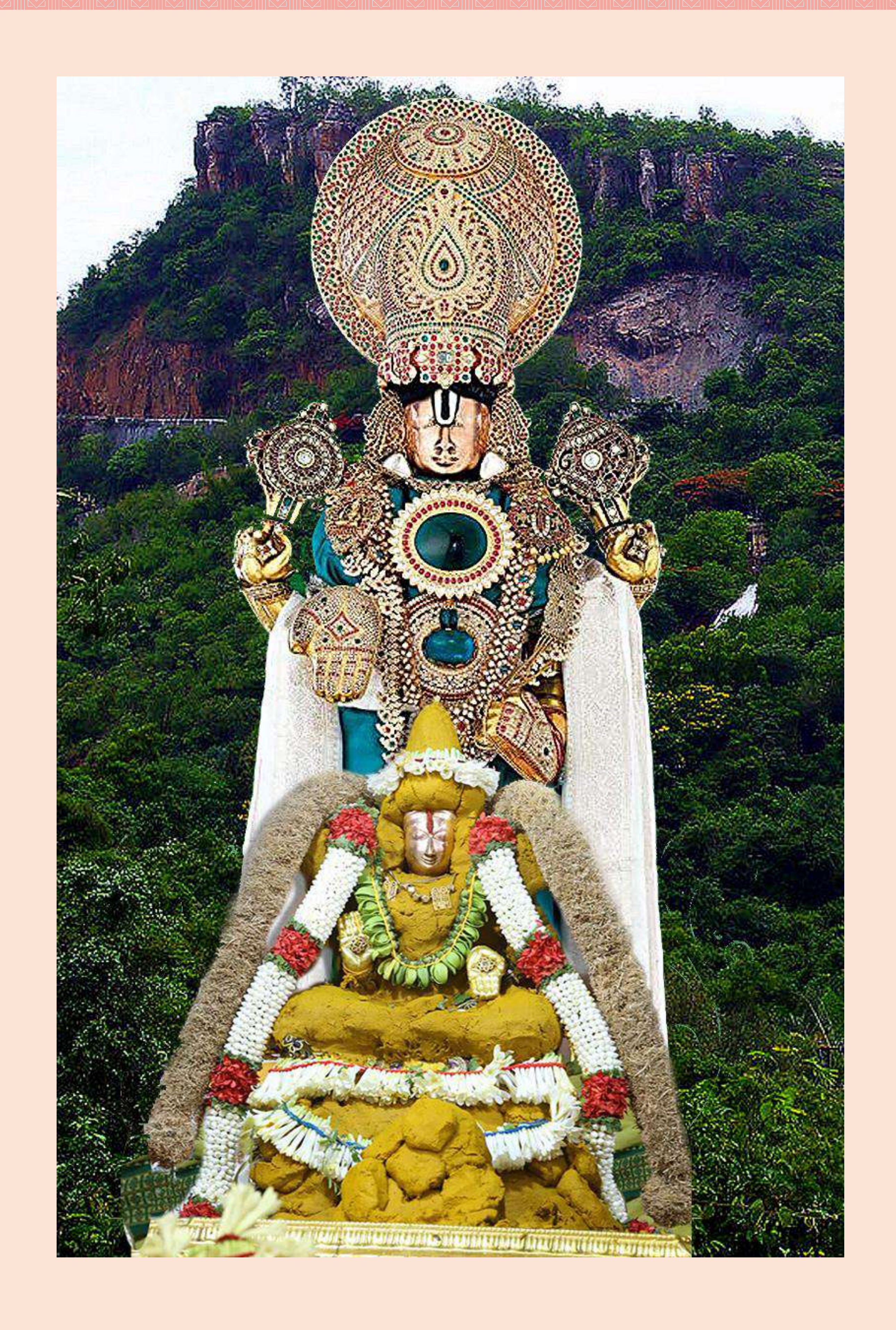
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Preface

Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmi

Kalau Venkatanayaka (Venkatanayaka is the Lord for Kaliyugam) is a glorification of the Lord of Tiruvenkatam. Without discrimination, he graces all equally regardless of who comes out to seek him. The 33 crore Devas, who inhabit the upper regions come down to the Tiruvenkatam Hill to seek the blessings of Lord Srinivasa, while inhabitants of the earth climb up the seven hills to receive his anugraham and are blessed with all they seek. He is known as Srinivasa, since Sri Mahalakshmi Thayar resides in his chest (Vakshasthalam). Due to Mahalakshmi taking residence here, he is known as Srinivasa - one who is constantly residing with Sri. If a fitting form were to be assigned to the Daya gunam of Lord Srinivasa, it would unmistakably be Mahalakshmi Thayar as evidenced by Swami Desikan's Daya Shatakam tribute. In fact the sacred Seven Hills themselves are a manifestation of the Lord's Daya. One who bears Mahalakshmi Thayar, the embodiment of anugraham and in whose dictionary the term punishment is non-existent, and one who stands on top of the Hill that is a manifestation of the Daya gunam, as a consequence predominantly exhibits this quality among his numerous kalyana gunams. Therefore, it is important to note that the singular characteristic for Lord Srinivasa is the Daya gunam. Therefore, Swami Desikan rather than glorifying Lord Srinivasa decided to glorify the Daya gunam, which is the cause for His loftiness in the Daya Satakam tribute. There are a lot of connections between Swami Desikan and Lord Srinivasa upon close examination. Swami Desikan was himself an avataram of Lord Srinivasa as evidenced by the salutations "venkateshAvataroyam tat ghaNTam sotavAbhavet" and "TiruvenkatanAthanin guruvAi" as enunciated by Swami Kumara Varadachariar. If one examines the avatara charithram and instances in the life of Swami Desikan one cannot find even a trace of nigraham (destruction of evil). Instead it is replete with anugraham born out of compassion. Because, he was verily a daya svarupi, if one examines the slokams of Daya Satakam in detail, it becomes apparent that Swami Desikan himself was a manifestation of Daya Devi. Therefore,

Swami Desikan is considered an avataram of Daya Devi herself. Daya Shatakam is a majestic tribute and can be considered a masterpiece of Swami Desikan. It is replete with extraordinary usages, content, and messages (soR cheRivum poruL cheRivum adangya migavum uyarnda stotram). It is not easy to expound upon the meanings of the individual slokams of this beautiful work by Swami Desikan. "Due to the munificent grace of Acharyas, adiyen was blessed to undertake the upanyasam of Daya Satakam during the month of Margazhi. At that time a great Mahan arrived and asked adiyen what did you do during the Margazhi month? Adiyen replied that due to Acharya anugraham adiyen had the bhagyam of undertaking Daya Satakam upanyasam to which he remarked "Daya Satakam. You?". This was meant to illustrate the loftiness of Daya Satakam and one's inability to fully bring out the purport of the individual verses. This is an appropriate statement. However, even so for vAksAphalyam and due to Acharya anugraham, adiyen undertook this task. This is adiyen's state even today. However, due to the grace of the Mahan, Sri Gopaladesika Mahadesikan (Paravakottai Andavan Swamy), the foremost among those endowed with virakthi, one of his sishyas Sri Veeravalli Raghunathachar Swami, who had great bhakthi for the Acharya requested adiyen to undertake the upanyasam of the individual verses of the Daya Satakam. Bhagavata's request became a command for adiyen. If anything worthy exists in the content of these upanyasams it is entirely due to Acharya anugraham and the blessings of adiyen's parents. This was the main reason for adiyen undertaking this commitment. Swami Desikan ensured a successful completion of this kaimkaryam. Using adiyen's upanyasam as the source, Sri Muralidharachar submitted the request for producing an English e-book version, which remained true to the purport of adiyen's exposition with the addition of viseshams from other Mahan's vyakhyanams mostly succinct encapsulation of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Swami's anubhavam. Sri Muralidharachar is a devout follower, bhakta, and sishya of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan Swami, Sri Gopaladesika Mahadesikan. Therefore, starting with the Sathamana Mahotsavam of this great saint, it is planned to release one Slokam every Saturday. Due to the anugraham of his Acharya, this kaimkaryam will be successful. He is ably supported by Smt. Jayashree Desikachari, who provided superb pictorial illustrations for the e-book, which greatly enhances the presentation. Adiyen conveys his Dhanyavadam to Smt. Jayashree Desikachari and Sri Muralidharachar. It is adiyen's prayer that all readers should beget the kataksham of Swami Desikan, Daya Devi, and Acharya with growth of Kaimkarya Sri.



Foreword

At the command of **Sri U.Ve. Sadagopan SvAmin** (who is an AchAryan for aDiyEn), aDiyEn is sharing a few reflections on Dayaa Devi from source commentaries on the Dayaa Satakam. aDiyEn is extremely grateful to **Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Swamin** for graciously granting permission to use his upanyasams as source material for this e-book as well as his yeoman efforts in carefully reading the summary of each verse and suggesting changes to the narrative. aDiyEn is also extremely thankful for Acharya anugraham from **H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan (Prakrutham Acharyan) of Srimad Poundarikapuram Andavan Swami Ashramam** for permission to use material from U.Ve. Sri Shaili Patrachariar Swamin's original commentary. aDiyEn realizes that he is most unfit for this gargantuan task and therefore requests forbearance from all readers for the numerous shortcomings of this narrative.





SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||

Sri:



SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM



AvatArikai:

Dayaa is the most important kalyANa guNam (auspicious quality) of Lord NArAyaNa. Therefore SvAmi NigamAnta Desikan has chosen to glorify this attribute of the Lord of Seven Hills in his Dayaa Satakam. Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin eloquently notes in his upanyasam "In all of SvAmi Desikan's works, the title itself contains the subject of his tribute. For example, MahAveera Vaibhavam glorifies the valor of Lord Rama through salutations such as asahAya shoora and anapAya sAhasa. DevanAyaka PanchAshat conveys key messages about the Lord of Tiruvaheendrapuram through glorification such as tridashaikanAtha, vibhudhaikanAtha, amarthyanAtha, and suparvanAtha, while Sri Stuti eulogizes Mahalakshmi ThAyAr through salutations such as lakShmIH padmaa jaladi tanayaa viShNupatnIndireti. Going by this logic, Dayaa Satakam should have been titled SrInivAsa Dayaa Satakam. However, SvAmi Desikan intentionally used the title Dayaa Satakam to reflect the combined mercy of the Divine Couple as evidenced in the concluding verse of this majestic stotram: dInAlambana divya dampati dayaa kallola kolAhala:"

SvAmi Desikan's genius comes through in that his glorification of Dayaa, an auspicious quality of Lord SrInivAsa, is given a concrete form, namely, ThAyAr. It may be helpful to note that SvAmi Desikan spent very little time at Tirumalai and hence there is only one stotram in praise of the Lord of Seven Hills. Here too the reference to Lord SrInivAsa is not direct and comes about through Dayaa Devi. The reason for this becomes apparent from the Desika mangaLam tribute "venkateshAvataroyam tat ghantAm sotavAbhavet". Since SvAmi Desikan was an

incarnation of the Lord SrInivAsa, he chose not to glorify Himself and instead focused his eulogies on Sri RanganAtha, Sri DevanAyaka, and Sri VaradarAja.

How did the composition then come about? SvAmi Desikan authored commentaries on the Divya Prabandham such as TAtparya RatnAvali, DramiDopanishat sAram, and nigama parimaLam. SvAmi's disciples submitted that a Sanskrit work in stotram form would be extremely valuable for nitya pArayaNam and therefore SvAmi composed the Dayaa Satakam. This stotram can be enjoyed in several ways: (1) A prima facie tribute to the auspicious quality of Dayaa (2) A tribute to SvAmi NammAzhvAr (3) An encapsulation of TiruvAimozhi in 108 majestic verses. The last facet becomes readily apparent while examining the structure of the stotram, which has ten themes:

1. Slokams 1-10: Lord SrInivAsa is the only one who can grant the boon of moksham resulting in eternal kaimkaryam to the divya dampatis

2. Slokams 11-20: He is the omniscient one

3. Slokams 21-30: He removes all obstacles that come in the way of sharaNAgataas desirous of moksham

4. Slokams 31-40: He is the object of all worthwhile endeavors

5. Slokams 41-50: He is the fruit of these endeavors

6. Slokams 51-60: He is readily accessed by the path of SharaNAgati

7. Slokams 61-70: He rushes to the succor of his supplicants with the same anxiety regardless of whether they are the smallest of the small or greatest of the great emperors

8. Slokams 71-80: He is the supreme principle residing on top of the VenkatAchalam hill

9. Slokams 81-90: He takes his principal avataras to demonstrate his easy accessibility

10. Slokams 91-100: He is capable of granting the bliss arising from eternal kaimkaryam in SrIVaikuntam in this leela vibhuti itself

Slokams 101-108 constitute the Phala Shruthi to bring the number of shlokams to an auspicious number corresponding to the number of SrIVaishnava Divya Desams.

This construct closely mirrors the 10 themes that are contained in the Tiruvaimozhi of SvAmi NammAzhwar. In the process SvAmi Desikan follows the

path trodden by great masters such as BhAshyakArar and SvAmi AlavandAr in bringing out insights from their Sri Suktis bearing eloquent testimony to Sri Andal's TiruppAvai declaration "mElayAr seyvanagal".

Sri U.Ve. Valaypettai Ramachar SvAmin's superb anubhavam is quoted again "Vedam connection to Dayaa Satakam avatArikai can be seen from the tribute "Anando brahme divya jAnAt AnandAdhyeva khalvimAni bhUtAni jAyante Anandena jAtAni jeevanti Anandam prayantyabhisam vishantIti, which glorifies Brahman in terms of Ananda gunam. The inner meaning is that the gunam itself is not Brahman, but Brahman is replete with Anandam. In a like manner, the Lord of Seven Hills replete with Dayaa gunam is saluted by SvAmi Desikan. We may also note the equivalence to Ramayanam in the sense that SvAmi Desikan was equally capable as Valmiki Maharishi in terms of poetic skills. Just as Valmiki instructed Lava and Kusha in the Ramayana and made them render it in the Sabha of Rama, SvAmi Desikan too conceived the Sabha consisting of great sages, Nitya Suris such as Ananta and Vishvaksena, supported by Nachiyars SrI Devi, BhU Devi and Neela Devi. The fitting venue for this Sabha is the seven hills of Venkatachalam delivered in the presence of the Lord himself!



This stotram is replete with Vishaya vailakshaNyam (majesty of the subject), vaktru vailakshaNyam (exalted stature of the author), Prabandha vailakshaNyam (multiple perspectives woven in from Arya and Dravida Vedam) and Phala vailakshaNyam (the benefit of reciting the stotram)" It is also helpful to recall the anubhavam of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan SvAmi, who blessed us with the upanyasam "pirAttiyumpirAnum seidha upakAram" wherein he notes "Our sampradayam is graced with the presence of 5 Devis - SrI Devi, BhU Devi, Neela Devi, Dayaa Devi, and Padukaa Devi. One may ask who is Dayaa Devi? The answer is unmistakably ThAyAr with the pramANam coming from the Sri Stuti salutation VishNu kAntE dayAm tE"



prapadhye taM giriM

Slokam 1

प्रपद्ये तं गिरिं प्रायः श्रीनिवासानुकम्पया ।

इक्षु सार स्रवन्त्येव यन्मूर्त्या शर्करायितम् ॥ १ ॥

prapadhye taM giriM praayaH shrInivaasaanukampayaa|

ikshu saara sravantyeva yanmuurtyaa sharkaraayitam|| 1



In the first verse, SvAmi Desikan conveys the essence of his tribute. The opening statement "Prapadye" (*prathama purusha Ekavachana*) unmistakably points to the path of unconditional total surrender. It may be helpful to note that several Desika Stotrams employ the usage prapadye such as "devam hayagrivamaham prapadye", "tvAm sharaNyAm prapadye", "vishvambarAma sharaNa: sharaNam prapadye", and "GodAmananya sharaNa: sharaNam prapadye". We may remember that prapannajana santAna kUtasthar, SvAmi NammAzhwar, performed his formal SaraNagati to the Lord of Seven Hills in the famous ahala illEn pasuram. Also SvAmi Alavandar declares in the Siddhi trayam that among the 3 Rahasyas, the Lord of Seven Hills denotes the Charma Slokam, which is the most straightforward advocacy of the doctrine of SaraNagati. In keeping with these declarations, SvAmi Desikan commences the Dayaa Satakam tribute with the statement prapadye.

Next it may be asked to whom is SvAmi performing the surrender? This answered in the very next statement "tam girim". The Hill referred to here is the Venkatam hill.

Adiyen quotes from the anubhavam of Sri Mukkur Lakshminarasimhachariar SvAmin here "It may be remembered that when Lord Narayana decided to incarnate as SrInivAsa, the 7 Khandams of the Yajur vedam and the 7 swarams of the Saman submitted their appeal to the Lord to incarnate as mountains that would bear the Lord's Lotus Feet. The Lord immediately granted their request and hence the seven hills are known as Vedagiri. SvAmi Desikan salutes this in his Tamil prabandham as "veda verpE"." In keeping with the sacredness of the seven Hills, we may also note that SvAmi Sri Bhashyakarar, refused to climb up to the top.

Instead after repeated pleas from his shishyas, Sri Bhashyakarar climbed up the hills using his knees.

The Venkatam hill is elaborated upon by Sri Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin in his anubhavam as “Venkatam means that which burns up one’s sins. Therefore, the SaraNagati is interpreted as pApa nivrutti. It also means vemkAram (*Amrutha BhIjam*) while katam denotes the Wealth. This lends itself to the interpretation of bliss arising from uninterrupted kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple. Therefore, the opening statement is a condensed version of the subject of the tribute as well as the benefit arising from the act. SvAmi Desikan does not stop here. He further glorifies the hill as the solidified crystalline sugar candy form arising from the torrential flow of the Lord’s Dayaa, which is like sweet tasting sugarcane juice. This gives a concrete form to the Hill.”



SvAmi NammAzhvar and SrI LakshmIhayagrIvar –

SrImad Andavan Poundarikapuram SvAmi Asramam, SrIRangam

It is also important to recall the anubhavam of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan SvAmi “This Slokam documents the supremacy of archAvataram over all other forms. Why? It is impossible to behold Lord Narayana in SrIVaikuntam by pratyaksham. In order to provide sevai for devatas such as Brahma, Rudra, and Indra, he takes VyUha avataras such as Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. However, is it possible to fill a kalasam with milk from the milky ocean where He is reclining on His serpent bed? No. In a like manner, he takes on Vibhava avatarams, which can only be enjoyed by those who were fortunate to be born at the time of these avatarams. This is akin to the rain waters being available only during the rainy season but making way for parched land during the summer. HArda form of the Lord is

extremely difficult to behold due to extraordinary requirements of upAsana. This is like trying to dig a well not knowing when water will surface. Therefore, these avatarams of the Lord while delectable are like the hard-to-obtain sweet tasting sugarcane juice. On the other hand, behold the glorious archa form of Lord SrInivAsa, which is like the ready to partake sugar candy.” Again, aDiyEn quotes from the anubhavam of Sri Mukkur Lakshminarasimhachariar SvAmin “Lord Rama went from one place to another to grace his Bhaktas and is therefore glorified as jangama pArijAta in the Mahaveera Vaibhavam. However, Lord SrInivAsa is forever located in the same place offering the instruction “come seeking me at your convenience, I am always here for you” and therefore is suitable for glorification as sthAvara pArijAta”.

The padam anukampa is elaborated upon again by Sri Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin as “In keeping with the vedam salutation bhIshAsmAd vAtah pavate, bhIshodeti sUryah, other deities like vAyu, Surya, Agni, Indra, and Yama tremble with fear of the awe-inspiring emperuman, and carry out their prescribed duties. However, does something cause EmperumAn to tremble? Indeed it is the suffering of those that have surrendered to him. This is seen from his anxiety to rush to the help of Gajendra. At that time, the Lord was in the company of his consorts, resting on his serpent bed. However, upon hearing the cry of the elephant, He rose in a fit, disregarded the query of Vishvaksena, and set out without his Padukas to mount Garuda and rush to the rescue of Gajendra. Here too finding the speed of Garuda to be inadequate, he used the Sudarshana Chakra to provide immediate relief to Gajendra. This trembling caused by the difficulties encountered by his SaraNagatas is defined to be anukampa.” It may also be noted that SvAmi Desikan quotes verbatim from Srimad Bhagavatam, where Veda Vyasa employs the salutation “SrinivasAnukampayA”.



Slokam 2

विगाहे तीर्थ बहुळां शीतळां गुरु सन्ततिम् ।

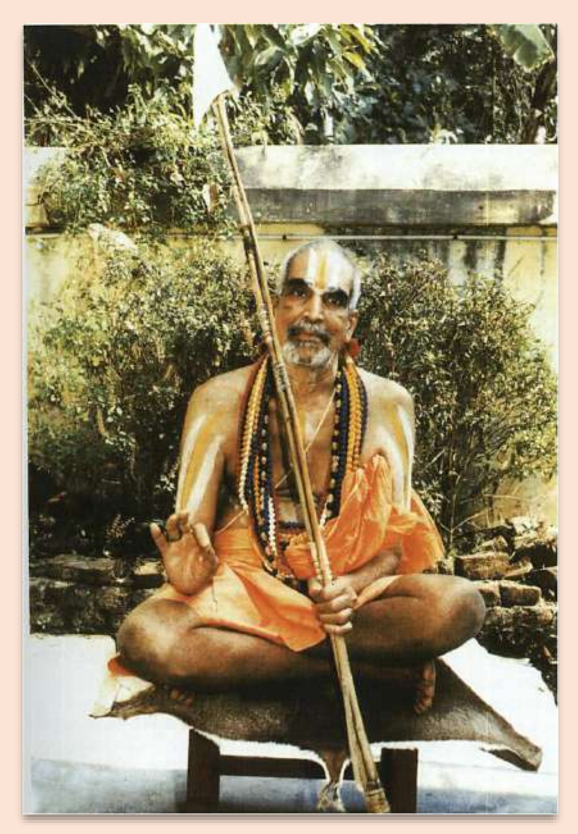
श्रीनिवास दयाम्भोधि परीवाह परम्पराम् ॥२ ॥

vigaahe tIrtha bahulaaM shItalaaM guru santatim|

shrInivaasa dayaambhodhi parIvaaha paramparaam || 2



Anubhavam of Sri Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin "In the previous verse SvAmi Desikan chose the venue (Sabha) for delivering his tribute as the Venkatam Hill and offered a salutation to the place. This could very well be viewed as the arena or stage for Rangapravesam/arangEtram of Dayaa Satakam. In such an occasion, it is customary to invite parama Aptas first before inviting all others. In this case SvAmi Desikan deems the Azhvars and Acharyas to be the first ones to invite through a salutation. The inner meaning here is that in order to approach Emperuman it is important to first seek the anugraham of Acharyas. For example in daily tiruvaradhanam, during AdhAra shakti, one seeks the blessings of Acharyas before engaging in aradhanam. In the NyAsa Vimshati opening verse, SvAmi Desikan salutes Acharyas as dIrghabandhum dayALum, instructing us in the fact that Acharyas have a lasting bond with their Sishyas. This bond is not merely valid as long as the Acharyas inhabit leela vibhUti but also prevails after the Acharyan attains Nitya vibhUti. How so? Through the Acharya Sri Suktis, which last way beyond their lifetime, just as we are enjoying the meanings of the individual padams of the Dayaa Satakam slokams more than 650 years after the incarnation of SvAmi Desikan concluded and SvAmi ascended Paramapadam. This bond also prevails in SrIVaikuntam, where the liberated jivan recognizes the Acharyan and upon offering salutations to the Acharyan engages in uninterrupted kaimkaryam for the Divya Dampatis. In this context, it is important to note that there are many kinds of relationships most of which are fleeting. For example, while traveling in a train or a bus one forms associations with fellow travelers and engage in small talk for the duration of the travel. Perhaps after a perfunctory exchange of contact information prior to travel completion, these associations are mostly forgotten. However, unlike these the association with one's Acharyan is long-lasting/permanent. The fact that Acharyas are most compassionate towards their shishyas is reflected in the dayALum salutation.



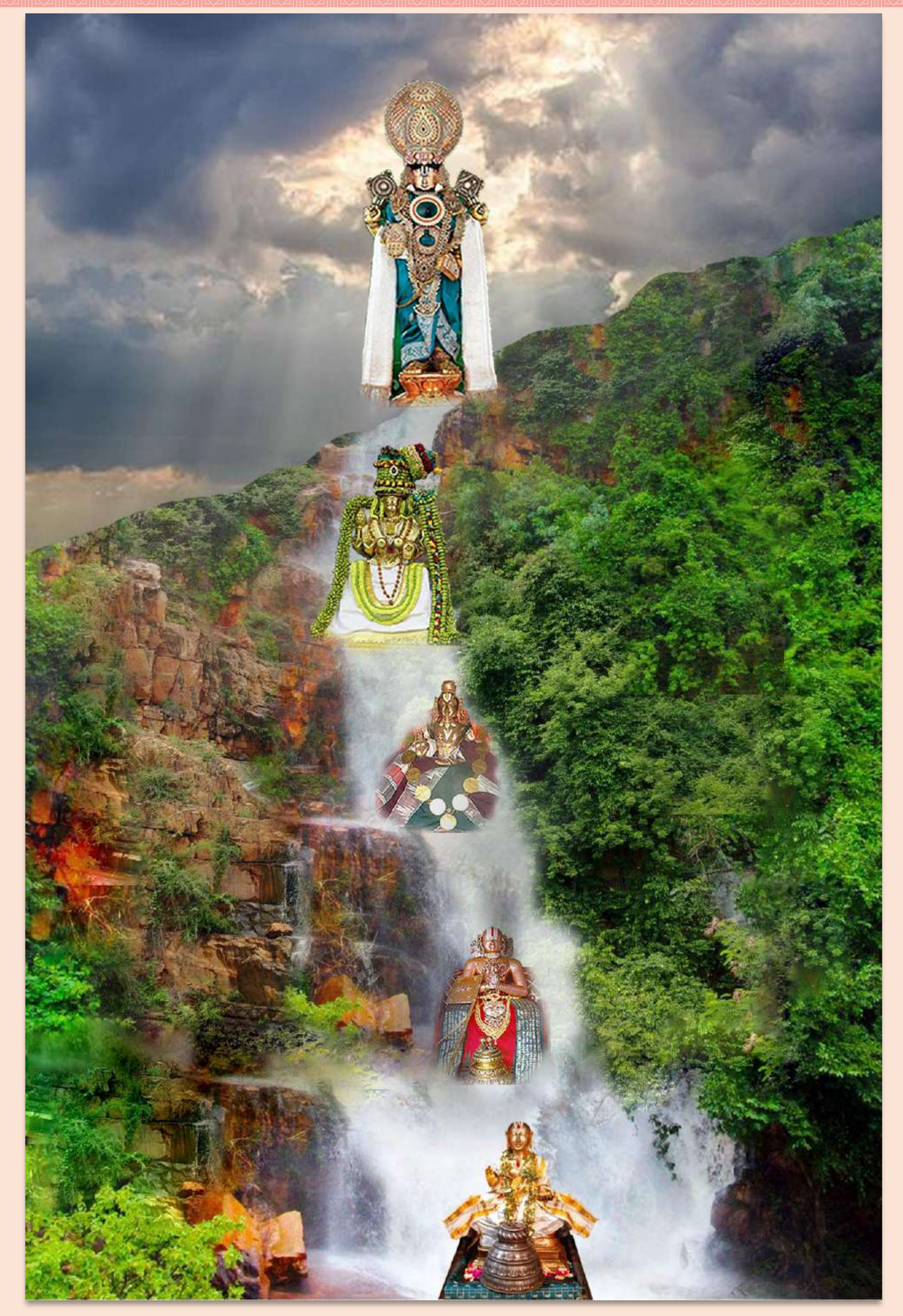
SrImad ParavAkkOTTai Periya Andavan SrImad Gopala Mahadesikan SvAmi

Acharyas have performed avagAha snAnam (deep immersion). In this context, the reference is to Azhvars (Azhndavar), who had dived deeply in the path of Bhakti for Lord Narayana. Their Sri Suktis are the cool waters arising from the ocean of mercy known as SrInivAsa Dayaa. Such Acharya Parampara is respectfully saluted in this verse. A key idea from Srimad Rahasya TrayasAram embedded in this verse is also captured eloquently in the Devanayaka Panchasat salutation:

devAdhinAtha kamalaa prutanesha pUrvAm dIptAntarAm vakuLabhUShaNa nAtha mukhyaiH | rAmAnuja prabhrutibhiH paribhUShitAgrAm goptrIm jaganti gurupanktim aham prapadye ||

Surrender to the guru parampara originating from Lord Narayana, including SrI, Vishvaksena, NammAzhvar, Sri NAthamuni Acharya, Sri YamunAcharya, and Sri Bhashyakarar, capable of protecting the entire universe is advocated here. This verse establishes the centrality of Sri Bhashyakara to the Sampradayam in that if the guru parampara originating from Lord Narayana to present day Acharyas is viewed as a garland, Sri Bhashyakarar becomes the central dollar. The inner meaning is that Acharyas preceding him became distinguished on account of his Tirumudi Sambandam, whereas Acharyas that followed him became sanctified on account of his Tiruvadi Sambandam.

The mahopakaram rendered by the Acharyas is that the torrential flow of Dayaa Devi containing powerful currents is capable of sweeping away anyone in its wake. On the other hand, Azhvars and Acharyas absorb this gushing flow of Dayaa and make it suitable for bathing by creating gentle outlets of cool and soothing water bodies rendering them fit for immersion by shishyas. The inner meaning is that EmperumAn's Dayaa may be difficult to comprehend/absorb on one's own accord. However, Azhvars and Acharyas through their compassion make this Dayaa stream readily available to their shishyas through their Sri Suktis."



Sri Shaili Patrachariar SvAmin's anubhavam is also mentioned here

"I now descend into the stream-flow coming from the large overflowing pond of Dayaa of Lord SrInivAsa. This stream has many bathing ghats so to say, corresponding to the various Acharyas in our Guru parampara. The inner meaning is that I pay homage to our great Acharya lineage of Nathamuni, Yamunamuni, Ramanujacharya, and others prior to them. The stream has cool water. It is a great service to hold the Dayaa flow in status quo without overflowing and being dissipated. There are many such convenient bathing spots (another interpretation of avagAha snAnam) as in the Ganga and Kaveri river. These are convenient descent spots for us. Since the stream is pure, cool, holy, and sanctified due to being the Dayaa flow of Lord SrInivAsa, these bathing spots (Acharyas) too are helpful, cool, sweet, and holy to redeem me, purify me, and elevate me. A number of ideas central to the sampradayam are embedded in this verse through a careful selection of words.

1. We are enabled to taste the elevating Dayaa of Lord SrInivAsa that will emancipate us. This is possible only by resorting to the sacred works of holy Acharyas like Nathamuni, Alavandar, and Sri Bhashyakarar.

2. Rivers such as the Ganga are known for their torrential flow and strong currents. Since it is risky to attempt a bath, when the river is in spate, one depends on bathing ghats. In a similar manner to avoid being overwhelmed by the pravAham of SrInivAsa Dayaa, kind Acharyas have provided bathing ghats for our safe descent and comfortable immersion.

3. The term parivAha suggests overflow, while parampara suggests steps, or a series of ghats.

4. The equivalence between the Dayaa-Parampara and Acharya-Parampara is made in this verse. The compassion of Acharyas is enormous. That alone will guarantee to us the Lord's Dayaa"

It may be helpful to note that in the context of ArchirAdi mArgam described through the prapadye salutation from the previous verse, the reference to Acharyas in this verse seems to allude to the Chandogya Upanishad salutations "AchAryaddhaiva vidyaa viditaa sAdhiShTham prApati iti" (In a conversation with his Guru Gautama, Satyakama-Jabala remarks that knowledge gained from an Acharya alone leads one to ultimate good) and "AchAryastu tE gatim vakta" (Upakosala had mastered Agni upasanam. Please with his dedication, the three agnis, AhavanIyam, gArhapathyam, and dakshiNAgni, offered him a boon.

Upakosala requested that he be instructed in ArchirAdi margam. The three agnis declined this request and advised him to seek this instruction from an Acharyan).



Slokam 3

कृतिनः कमलावास कारुण्यैकान्तिनो भजे ।

धत्ते यत्सूक्ति रूपेण त्रिवेदी सर्वयोग्यताम् ॥ ३ ॥

krutinaH kamalaavaasa kaaruNyai kaantino bhaje|

dhatte yatsUkti rUpeNa trivedI sarvayogyataam ||3



In this verse the glory of the Azhvars is brought out further. The anubhavam of Sri Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin is quoted first "In the Rama avataram, the Lord upon killing Ravana instructed Lakshmana to enter Lanka and perform the Pattabhishekam of Vibhishana. Upon completion of this task, when Lakshmana returned to Rama's side, the Lord remarked, "I have now completed the task that I had set out to accomplish and the purpose of my coming here crossing the sea has been served". This is the import of the padam kruti, namely completing that which one sets out to accomplish. In a like manner or perhaps even better, the Azhvars exceed the Lord in this regard.

Why is this true? The Lord has provided us with Sastras to lead our lives properly. Among the Sastras, the Vedas reign supreme in keeping with the statement "veda shAstrAt param nAsti na daivam keshavAt param-there is no Sastram greater than the Vedas and there is no deity greater than Keshava". In this regard, the affection that is displayed by the Vedas is thousand times greater than the combined affection of parents for their children and is therefore meant for their well-being. When it comes to a mother, there is no question of discriminating between her children. All of them are privy to motherly love equally. However, in the case of the Vedas exuding their motherly love, although they would like to grace everyone equally, they are bound by restrictions on who can and who cannot recite the Vedas. In particular, women and those belonging to the fourth caste are not privy to the Vedas. Therefore, exclusions inevitably arise. Here is where the Azhvars come to the rescue by rendering their Sri Suktis, which contain the messages from the Vedas in chaste Tamil, which is suitable for all, regardless of caste, creed, sex, or affiliation. Therefore, entire humanity can receive the benefit of following the instructions from the Vedam and gain elevation. Due to this mahopakaram, the Azhvars can lay claim to accomplishing what even the Lord was

unable to do in his numerous avatarams. Therefore, they are superior to the Lord with respect to Kruti.

When Emperuman decided to incarnate as SrInivAsa, Dayaa Devi sent out the Nityasuris such as Anantha, Garuda, Vishvaksena et al under the pretext of performing mangalAsAsanam to the Lord. These Nitya Suris were in the form of Azhvars, whose singular purpose was to bring out the esoteric messages of the Vedam in simple-to-understand tamil. It must also be remembered that the Vedam functions as the life breath of Lord Narayana as glorified through the salutation nishvAsitam veda: If he incarnated as Rama, the Vedam took the form of Ramayanam as evidenced by the salutation veda prAcetasAdAsIth sAkshAt rAmAyaNAtmanaH vedAtma vihageshvaraH is the salutation of SvAmi Alavandar. GarutmAn is saluted as Veda svarUpi. When it comes to the Azhvars, SvAmi Alavandar salutes them through the tribute matApitAyuvatastanayAvibhUtiH which goes to show that SvAmi NammAzhvar's Feet are the mother, father and everything for me and my followers, which includes sishya paramparai and everyone associated with me. SvAmi NammAzhvar's pasurams contained the essence of the Vedam in a manner suitable for use by all. This anugraham coming about due to the grace of Dayaa Devi is saluted by SvAmi Desikan as yat sUktirUpeNa trivedi sarvayogyatAm dhatte in this verse. The enormity of SvAmi NammAzhvar's anugraham is best illustrated by the KaNNinun SiruttAmbu tribute of Madhurakavi Azhvar

AruLkoNDaDum aDiyavar inbura—Bhagavatas gain delight from the outpourings of SvAmi NammAzhvar

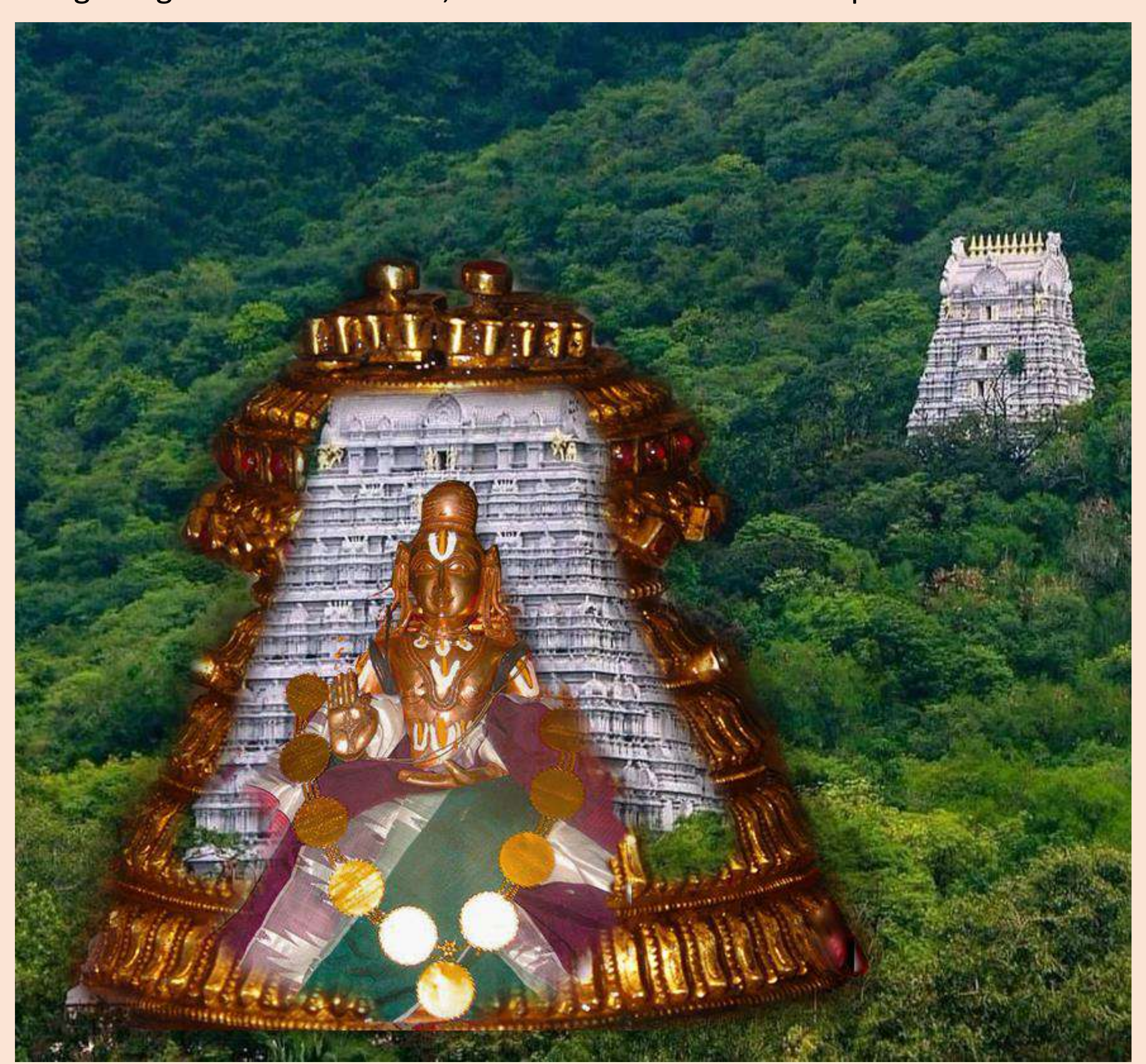
AruLinAn avvaru maRayin poruL—He blessed us with the inner meanings of the Vedam

AruL kondu Ayiram intamizh pADinAn—His grace came in the form of 1000 pasurams in chaste Tamil

AruL kanDIr ivvulaginil mikkadE—Can there be any greater blessing conferred upon us? This illustrates the importance of SvAmi NammAzhvar to the sampradayam, which enabled the upliftment of all. In this context, NammAzhvar is used as the upalakshaNam for all the Azhvar outpourings and thus praises the contribution of all the Azhvars as kruti.

Next the focus turns to kArUnyaikAntinobhaje. Various purushArthas can be gained by worshipping various deities as outlined by the Slokam "Arogyam bhAskarAt icchet shrimyamtu hutAshanAt" namely Surya confers good health,

while worship of Agni confers wealth. Rudran grants knowledge, while Janardhana grants moksham. All deities except LORD Narayana can only confer limited benefits. However, Lord Narayana is the one-stop shopping convenience for getting all benefits earthly and beyond. Therefore, an ekAnti is one who seeks all of these purushArthas exclusively from Lord Narayana by offering prayers to Him alone (jnAnam from Hayagrivar, wealth from ThAyAr, and moksham itself from the Divine Couple). However, a paramaikantin is one who is only desirous of uninterrupted kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple-even Moksham becomes a mere by-product of this singular goal. In this context, the Azhvars are matchless paramaikantins.



Vishvaksena incarnated as SvAmi NammAzhvAr to perform kaimkaryams to the Lord in Leela Vibhuti!

This is evidenced from SvAmi NammAzhvar's tribute "emmAveeTTu thiramum cheppam". SvAmi NammAzhvar was enjoying a communion with Lord.

Lord Narayana was extremely pleased with the Azhvar's tribute and asked the Azhvar why don't you come with me? I shall grant you moksham. To this SvAmi NammAzhvar asks, what is it that I gain by moksham? To this the Lord answers freedom from the pangs of thirst, hunger, sleep, karma, and the unending cycle of births and deaths. There will be no bodily ills afflicting you and you will be replete with the 8 gunams characterizing the Brahman as expounded upon in the Chandogya Upanishad. To this the Azhvar replies if this is all I get in moksham, I do not want moksham. Here a question arises, namely why is the Azhvar discarding the parama purushArtham being offered directly by the Lord. This is because of the kaimkarya ruchi of the Azhvar for uninterrupted kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple. The Azhvar says can moksham confer me this benefit? If yes, I shall gleefully accept it. If not nothing is lost, and the kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple in leela vibhuti continues. This attitude of the Azhvar renders him as a Paramaikantin par excellence.

Next, it is helpful to examine the slokam from the standpoint of the fundamental sampradayic tenets of kAraNa avastai and kArya avastai. For example, clay can be transformed by capable hands into a pot. Clay by itself has little use. On the other hand the pot has multiple uses. However, the clay is the material cause for the pot. Similarly a bar of gold, while valuable has little use. On the other hand if it is made into an ornament such as a ring, bangle, or necklace it becomes useful. The clay or the gold bar are kAraNa avastai, whereas the pot or the ornaments are kArya avastai. In the context of this slokam it is helpful to refer to an ancient maNipravALam commentary by the great Acharyan, Sri. U.Ve. TiruvahIndrapuram SvAmin, who eloquently notes that the Vedam replete with difficult-to-understand passages is like the gold bar. On the other hand the genius of the Azhvars has transformed the Vedam into a beautiful ornament through their aruLicheyal suitable for use by all. Therefore, the Sri Suktis of the Azhvars are a matchless treasure."

The anubhavam of Sri Shaili Patrachariar SvAmin is reproduced next

"I now pay obeisance to the great fortunate seers, who were singularly attached to the receipt of SrInivAsa's Karunya shower-who had no other interest, no activity, no hope, no agenda other than this. They became achievers of what one ought to achieve in this world. Their "Divine Poetic Works" attained the reputation of being resorted to by all men and women, indiscriminately, without regard to their level of birth or intellectual attainment. The virtue of universality cannot be claimed by the three Sanskrit Vedas. However, their mapping into

delectable Tamil verses through the Azhwar Sri Suktis made the otherwise intractable Vedic content accessible in Tamil to all men and women. These Azhvars are denoted by the term krutinaH meaning great fortunate achievers. We routinely hear about individuals receiving honors and accolades for a lifetime of achievement. In the case of Azhvars they were masterly achievers, who need to be glorified for a multitude of lifetime achievements. Their achievements are briefly summarized below:

1. They made the otherwise intractable Sanskrit Vedas and their tenets, mandates and philosophical content available to all in the Tamil language. It is to be noted that this is not a mere translation of the Arya Vedam into Tamil, but a majestic outpouring conforming to the tenets of Ashu kavi, Chitrakavi, Madhura kavi etc in terms of poetic excellence.

2. Azhvar's works are original wisdom. They were irrefutably born into this world because SrInivAsa Dayaa wished to help humanity.

3. They were not only recipients of the Lord's Dayaa in abundance, but also instructed the world that people's only hope of salvation lay in the Lord's Dayaa.

4. They claimed no virtue as composers. They were led to poetic composition by the Lord on account of his Dayaa

5. They were forever immersed in the enjoyment of the Lord's majesty, magnificence, mammoth qualities of charming pre-possessiveness.

6. They are truly Azhvars (Azhndavar)-the immersed ones

7. Their works are appropriately entitled "aruLicheyalgal"-rendered out of their grace or Dayaa guNam.

8. We recite and contemplate on these works. If we have a heart with tenderness, we are moved even to tears of joy of mystic experience. We become immersed in the ocean of beatitude. So much was never achieved by anyone in a lifetime. Therefore, they are great achievers, truly fortunate seers. Srimad Bhagavatam praises them as propagators of Vishnu Bhakti in Kali yugam citing the river basins where most of them were born.

9. What the Azhvars preached in Tamil was the distilled wisdom of the Sanskrit Vedas and Upanishads. Their philosophy is no different from Vedic wisdom as expounded by Sri Ramanujacharya. This fact led to the new terminology of "Ubhaya Vedanta" (Twin-Vedanta)-a singular virtue of Srivaishnavam."

Slokam 4

पराशर मुखान् वन्दे भगीरथ नये स्थितान्।

कमला कान्त कारुण्य गङ्गाप्लावित मद्विधान्॥४॥

paraashara mukhaan.h vande bhagIratha naye sthitaan|

kamalaa kaanta kaaruNya ga~Ngaaplaavita madvidhaan||4



Anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "In this verse the role of great maharishis such as Parasara is saluted by Svami Desikan. In this instance it may be asked why are the Azhvars saluted before the Maharishis? The reason is that this stotram is devoted to the tenet of Saranagati to invoke the Dayaa of Lord SrInivAsa. Maharishis mention the Dayaa Gunam along with other kalyana gunams of Lord Narayana, whereas the Azhvars have the Dayaa gunam as their singular focus. Hence they are praised first and then the glorification of Maharishis follows. In this context, Parasara Rishi is glorified first." As a side note it is helpful to bear in mind that Rishi Parasara had undertaken the performance of a yajnam to destroy all the rakshasas. Due to the power of his tapas, all the rakshasas started falling into the yajnakundam and were destroyed by the fire. Pulastya Rishi, the progenitor of the Rakshasa clan appealed to Vasishta, the grandfather of Parasara Rishi, to intercede on his behalf and rescue the rakshasa clan. Vasishta appeared before Parasara and instructed him to cease from performing this yajnam. Parasara immediately complied with the wish of his grandfather and thus the entire Rakshasa clan was saved from destruction. Pleased with this act, Pulastya Rishi blessed Rishi Parasara with the boon of immense knowledge such that all his compositions would reflect the inner meanings of the Vedas. Therefore, there arose the grand work Vishnu Puranam from Rishi Parasara, which is entirely consistent with the messages contained in the Vedas. Due to this feature, the Vishnu Puranam is hailed as Purana Ratnam (crown jewel among the puranas). We now return to the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin. "Why is Parasara so great? His greatness can be seen from the Vedam tribute "sahovAca vyAsa pArAsharyaH" namely VyAsa's claim to fame comes about on account of being the son of Rishi Parasara. Now Vyasa was the grand editor of the Vedas, composer of the 18 puranas, and the epic Mahabharata. He also blessed us with the Vedanta sutras and outlined various relationships inherent therein through the

sharIra-sharIri bhAvam, AdhAra-Adheya bhAvam. If his greatness is linked to that of Parasara, how much greater should Parasara be is the rhetorical question, which requires no answer. Svami Alavandar salutes Parasara Rishi in the Stotra Ratnam as

"tattvena yascidacidIsvaratatsvabhAvabhogApavargatadupAyagatırudAraH

Asamdarsayan niramimIta purANaratnam

tasmai namo munivarAya parAsharAya"

Chit-Achit-Ishvara tattvam was first revealed to us by Sri Parasara Rishi. He expounded on their essential nature (svarUpam) in the Vishnu purAnam. What is meant by purAnam? Something that exists already but is made enjoyable in increasingly newer forms is known as purAnam. For example, each time one reads the Ramayanam Lord Rama can be enjoyed from a new perspective. It is this inexhaustible delight arising from repeated anubhavam of the Lord that characterizes the purAnam. Each year, one can enjoy the Garuda Sevai for Lord Varadaraja. The anubhavam remains unchanged each year and is identically replicated. However, one is never satisfied with the feeling that "I witnessed this sevai last year. Therefore, there is nothing new to be gained. Instead, if one is unable to attend the sevai, a great deal of regret follows". This is the manner of enjoying the Lord repeatedly as advocated in the purAnam. What was Parasara Rishi's mahopakaram to mankind? Svami Desikan glorifies him as verily Bhagiratha. To understand this, let us briefly dwell upon the charitram of BhagIratha as expounded by the Ramayana. There was a king in the Ikshvaku dynasty known as Sagara, who had 60,000 sons. King Sagara undertook the performance of the Asvamedha yajnam. The sacrificial horse was allowed to roam. However, Indra fearful of losing his status as the performer of an unprecedented number of Asvamedha yajnas, stole the horse and hid it in Patala lokam near the Asramam of sage Kapila. The sons of Sagara came in search of the horse and arrived at the Asramam of Kapila, where they incurred apacharam towards the great sage Kapila. Therefore, they were reduced to ashes. Bhagiratha was the son of the great-grandson of Sagara, who undertook the task of redeeming his ancestors. The importance of Pitru karyam is highlighted here. Progress of one's progeny is critically dependent on discharging one's obligations to the ancestors through the performance of tarpanams and Sraddhams. In this context the sons of Sagara had been reduced to ashes and had no one to undertake Pitru Karyam for them. Bhagiratha realized that by bringing the Ganga down to the nether regions and washing the ashes of his ancestors, they would be redeemed and that there would be no blackmark in the IkshvAku race. Therefore, he undertook intense tapas to

Brahma. Pleased with his austerity, Brahma consented to releasing the Ganga from the upper regions to help Bhagiratha. Just as Bhagiratha undertook yeoman effort to get the Ganga to redeem his ancestor Parasara redeemed suffering beings in the world. How so? All beings in the world were not in the burnt state of the Sagara-Putras. Here is where one needs to be aware of the dagdha pata nyAyam, i.e., a burnt cloth exists in an inert form incapable of anything. In a like manner baddha jivans engaged in a plethora of apacharams have the same plight as the Sagara-Putras. Sage Parasara's works were verily the Ganga, by resorting to which the sins arising from these apacharams could be effortlessly washed away. This then grants the jnanam to perform Saranagati and open up the flow of Lord SrInivAsa's Dayaa, the Ganga flow to redeem the baddha jivans. anagha tattvavannigrahaH Therefore, he acquires a stature similar to BhagIratha."



We then turn to the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachar SvAmin "I now hail the glory of sages like Parasara. I bow unto all of them. It is they who brought the purifying Ganga onto us to save our souls. In effect their works such as

Parasara's Vishnu purAnam, Vyasa's Mahabharata, Suka Brahmam's Srimad Bhagavatam, and Valmiki Ramayana serve to instill Bhakti in us. So they stand like BhagIratha in this regard.

1. The reference to our "immersion in the Ganga-flow of their works" is to complete the analogy with BhagIratha. His Ganga immersed the ashes of his forefathers and resurrected them to able to go to the Svarga domain.

The purifying flow, the figurative Ganga, that the holy epics and purAnas constitute will drown the sinners that we are; we today remain like ashes without life and proper activity. That we have a mind, a conscience, a power of perception would not make a difference without real realization, without a correct vision, and with sensual knowledge and sensual experience alone as our activity, we are no better than the sons of Sagara.

2. Svami Alavandar pays obeisance in the Stotra Ratnam in ascending order to Nathamuni, Parasara Muni, then Satakopa (Azhvar) and then the Lord. However, Svami Desikan's order is not distinct although ascending. Verse 2 for Acharyas, verse 3 for Azhvars. They all occupy a place in our guru-parampara. When coming to the sages, it is additional. Hence this obeisance comes here."



Slokam 5

अशेष विघ्न शमनम् अनीकेश्वरमाश्रये ।

श्रीमतः करुणाम्भोधौ शिक्षा स्रोत इवोत्थितम् ॥ ५ ॥

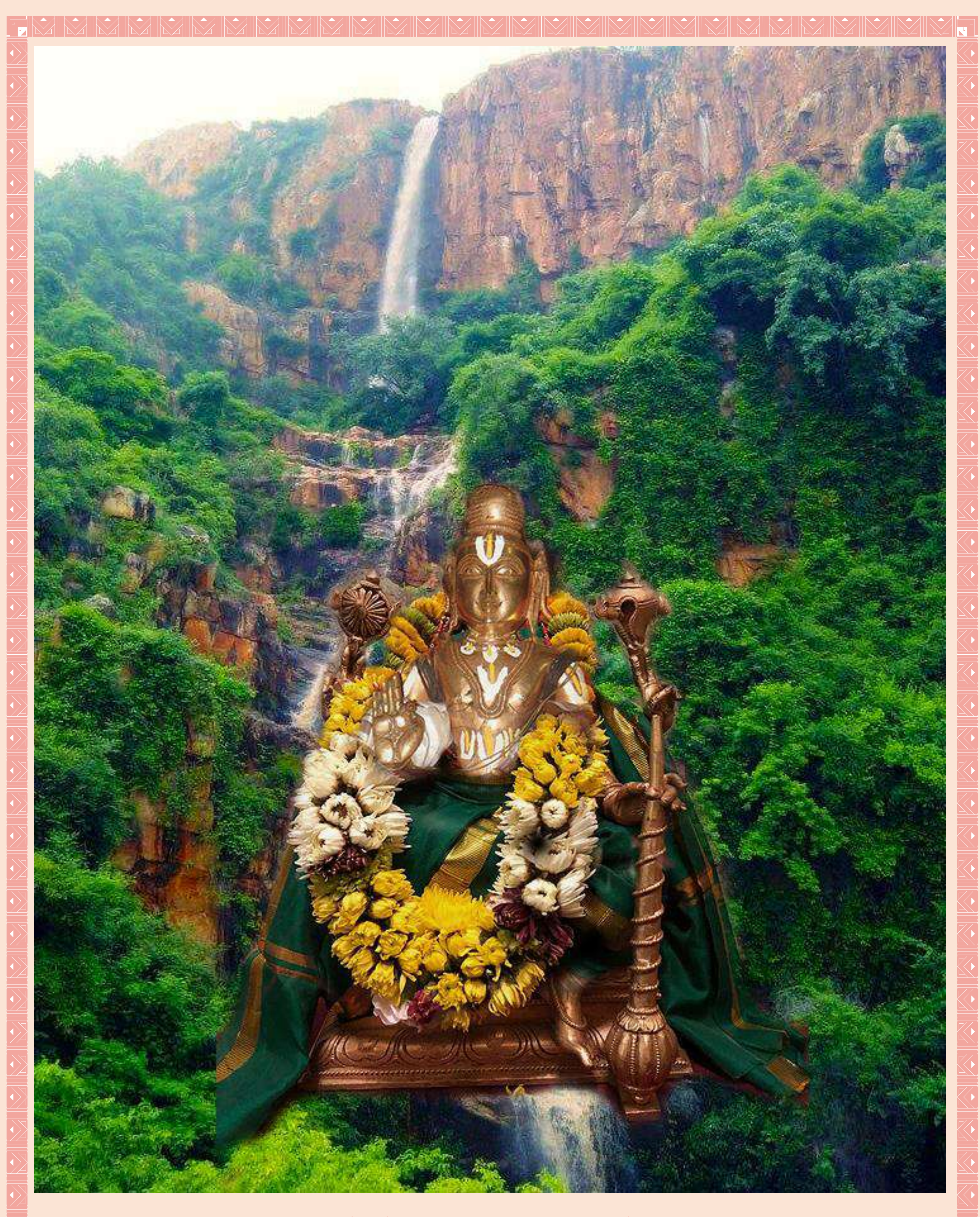
asheSha vighna shamanam anIkeshvaram aashraye|

shrImataH karuNaambhodhau shikshaa srota ivotthitam||5



We commence with the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin

"So far Svami Desikan has saluted Azhvars, Maharishis, and Acharyas. Now in the Guru Parampara reckoned in ascending order after Svami Nammazhvar comes Vishvaksena, the remover of all obstacles. When commencing any auspicious activity, it is customary to begin with Vishvaksena Aradhanam. In this instance Svami Desikan is undertaking the most auspicious task of glorifying Dayaa Devi. To ensure an obstacle free conclusion of this tribute, Svami Desikan salutes Vishvaksena and invokes his blessings. "shreyAmsi bahuvighnAni" is the salutation that describes the increased obstacles for any auspicious task. To ensure success from start to finish it is necessary to invoke the grace of Vishvaksena. For instance let us consider the Ramayanam where King Dasaratha desired to perform the pattabhishekam for Lord Rama. There can be no greater joyous occasion than this. However, this was replete with obstacles. First the hunch-back Manthara poisons Kaikeyi's mind about the crowning ceremony of Rama. Kaikeyi could have resisted the urge to yield to Manthara's ill-conceived notions and scheme. However, she did not and instead succumbed to this. King Dasaratha had the power to stop the injustice to Rama, but he was helpless. Lord Rama too could have asserted his right as the jyeshta putran of Dasaratha and claimed the throne. However, he was bound to the vow of Pitru-vachana palanam. Vasishtar, the kula guru for the Ikshvaku dynasty was an expert in all Sastras including jyotisham. However, he too could not have foreseen the stoppage of the Pattabhishekam. In this instance Svami Desikan is commencing his tribute to Dayaa Devi and the torrential flow of Slokams like Ganga-pravaham is about to ensue. Svami Desikan is fearful of obstacles that could stop this and therefore offers salutations to Vishvaksena. What is the significance? Vishvak means all directions, while sena means army. Therefore, Vishvaksena drives away all obstacles from all directions with this army.



Vishvaksenar is Svami Nammazhvar

Vishvaksena has 3 lieutenants guarding the various directions. They ensure that no obstacles ensue. This Vishvaksena is saluted by Svami Desikan as a result of the Divya Dampati dayaa manifesting as two streams-one to bless all Saranagatas and the other to correct the errant Saranagatas. The second stream manifests as Vishvaksena, who holds a wand as if to indicate "Beware of the Lord's command. Otherwise stern punishment awaits" In this instance it may be asked, how is the threat of punishment consistent with Dayaa? Svami Desikan answers this by saying that Vishvaksena is an Acharya. The role of an Acharya is itself to correct errant sishyas on account of his extreme compassion for the sishyas. Therefore even correcting the errant jivans is an act of Dayaa. For example, if a shishya goes to an Acharyan seeking Samashrayanam, the first question that is asked is "Do you do your Sandhyavandanam?" The intent is to ensure that the sishyan acts in conformance with the dictates of the Lord and does not engage in any violation, which incurs the displeasure of the Lord. It is customary of elders serving food to males to ask if they had performed Sandhyavandanam prior to partaking of food. The intent is to ensure that the sishya conforms to the Lord's mandates and is a fitting receptacle for the Lord's grace. Therefore, such a correction of errors is very much an act of Dayaa. We can further understand this from the Kakasura incident. Kakasura committed a grave apacharam towards Sita Piratti and therefore was deserving of serious punishment. However, upon realizing the might of the BrahmAstra of Rama, Kakasura performed Saranagati to Lord Rama and received the light punishment of losing one eye. This was therefore an anugraham rather than nigraham. Similarly, in the Vamana avataram, the Lord in the form of a Brahmin sought 3 paces of land from Bali Chakravarti. The asura guru Sukracharya cautioned Bali that the Brahmachari was Lord Vishnu himself. Bali replied that it was an honor for him that the Lord of the universe was seeking a gift from him. Sukracharya despite cursing Bali for violating his command had at his heart the best interest of Bali and therefore, tried to obstruct the flow of the Sankalpa water from the Kamandalu opening by taking the form of an insect. The Lord realizing this cleared the opening of the Kamandalu using a blade of darbha grass. As a result Sukracharya lost one eye. The Azhvar pasuram salutes this incident as opening the eyes of Sukracharya. One may ask how is removing the eye equivalent to eye-opening. The answer comes in the form of the Sastram - one who prevents the performance of noble act acquires sin of enormous proportion condemning them to reside in hell. In this case Bali Chakravarti was performing an extremely noble kaimkaryam of danam to the Lord Himself. Therefore, by this light punishment the Lord made Sukracharya aware of this SAstraic prescription and corrected him. Thus

it was an eye-opener for Sukracharya. Returning to Vishvaksena, Svami Desikan salutes him as waving the wand as if to warn errant jivans of the graveness of their sins as a way of instructing them to desist. This is captured by the salutation shikShAsrota ivotthitam."

Next we turn to the anubhavam of Sri Shaili Patrachariar Svamin

"1. Vishvaksena is popularly known as Senai Mudaliar in Tamil. He is one of the 3 popular nityasuris - Ananta, Garuda and Vishvaksena. There is no specific protocol among the three. Each though has a specific role.

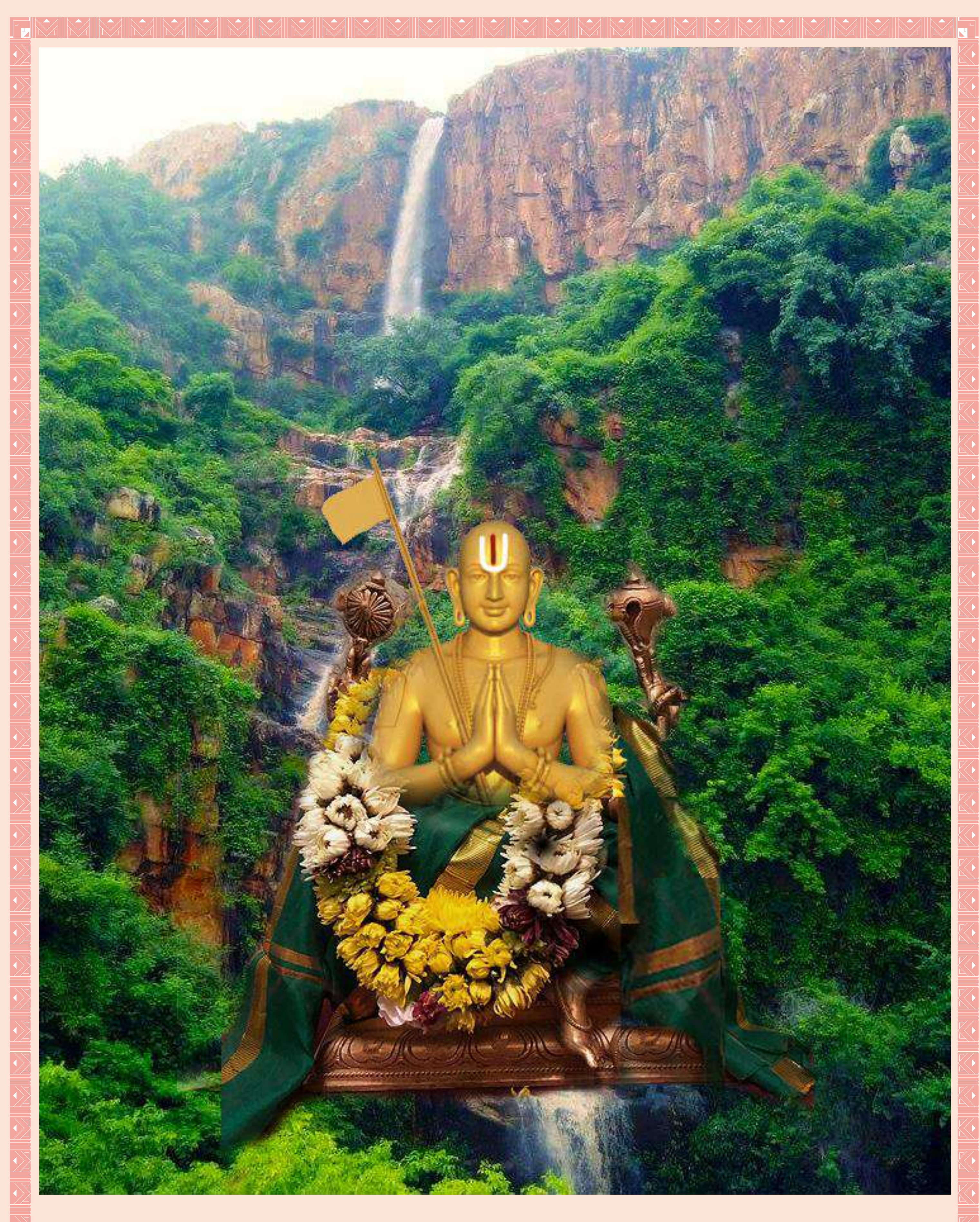
2. Vishvaksena holds a tree-twig in his hand. He disciplines the Lord's large army, so to say. Svami Desika has a love to describe that he incarnated as Ramanuja, when the tree-twig became the tridandam, perennially associated with ascetics.

3. Tradition is that he is the Acharya for Svami Nammazhvar. Who else can instruct the greatest saint-poet? The Acharya parampara that we cherish has therefore, the transcendental linkage between the Azhvar (Satakopa) and Vishvaksena

4.It may seem odd that Svami Desikan considers in the midst of the Dayaa-paean-this attendant of the Lord, who is apparently a disciplinarian. In this context it must be understood that a kind mother has to apply a little strictness and mild discipline to correct a small child. The child does not like this. Nor do we - claiming great maturity, wisdom, and common-sense- relish law mandates of the Lord. However, a little discipline has to be enforced on everyone to ensure proper behavior. This corrective action comes from the tree twig of Vishvaksena. Therefore, he is indeed the most Dayaa-filled attendant of the Lord.

5. A popular allusion now. This hymn is on Dayaa Devi. We go to worship the Lord at the Hill. We witness Vishvaksena's role being taken up by the Temple attendant. He regulates us; our queue; our progress and also our worship-bliss! He has a twig and lashes it on us. Thanks to his kindness!

6.Svami Desika lists the characteristics for a spiritual guru in the Nyasa Vimsati. In it there is mentioned a pre-requisite quality for being a good preceptor. What is it? One who disciplines, admonishes, and corrects, when the disciple errs, deviates, and does sinful things. Therefore, by this dictum, Vishvaksena is an ideal Acharyan!"



Vishvaksenar is SrI Ramanujar!

Slokam 6

समस्त जननीं वन्दे चैतन्य स्तन्य दायिनीम्।

श्रेयसीं श्रीनिवासस्य करुणामिव रूपिणीम्॥ ६॥

samasta jananIM vande caitanya stanya dAyinIm |

shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm || 6



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valaypettai Ramachar Svami:

"After Vishvaksena in the Acharya parampara comes Mahalakshmi. What is the unique distinguishing characteristic of Mahalakshmi? It is the vatsalyam that she exudes for Her children. It is helpful to remember that Svami Desikan follows closely the path laid down by his purvacharyas. Accordingly, samastajananIm- mother of all chetanams in the universe is the salutation used to describe her greatness in the manner of Svami Nammazhvar's tribute of "akalakillEn" denoting inseparability from Lord Narayana. This is also consistent with the Vishnu puranam tribute of Parashara Rishi namAmi sarvalokAnAm jananIm abdhisambhavAm (I salute the Mother of the Universe, Mahalakshmi, who arose from the milky ocean) tvam mAtaa sarvalokanAm devo devo hariH pitaa tvayaitad viShNunA cAmba jagatvyAptam carAcaram (You are the mother for all beings movable and immovable in the Universe and Lord Narayana is their father. The essential nature of you both is to pervade everything in the universe). This is captured through the salutation "samasta jananIm" Additionally, it is consistent with Sri Bhashyakarar's tribute of akhila jagan mAtaram asman mAtaram. What is the need for the asman mAtaram tribute when akhila jagan mAtaram is in place? This is to denote the personal connection with Thayar for Bhashyakarar just as a little child hugs its mother and declares "this is my mother", while the akhila jagan mAtaram is meant as a common tribute as mother of all. This is also a reflection of the connection to Svami Alavandar, who was popularly known as Lakshmi Kumarar - the son of Lakshmi. Hence, Sri Bhashyakarar seeks refuge at the feet of Mahalakshmi through his Acharyan, Svami Alavandar. It is also important to note that Svami Desikan after saluting Mahalakshmi in the Acharya Parampara now has a special request for her. Here he is composing the tribute Daya shatakam, which needs to be heard by Lord

Srinivasa. The best way to accomplish this is to submit the appeal to Mahalakshmi Thayar. This is captured in the Devanayaka Panchasat salutation:

"mAtastvamamburuhavAsini kincidetat

vij~nyApyate mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam |

AkarNayiShyati yathA vibhudeshvaraste

preyAnasau pruthuka jalpita vanmaduktim ||"

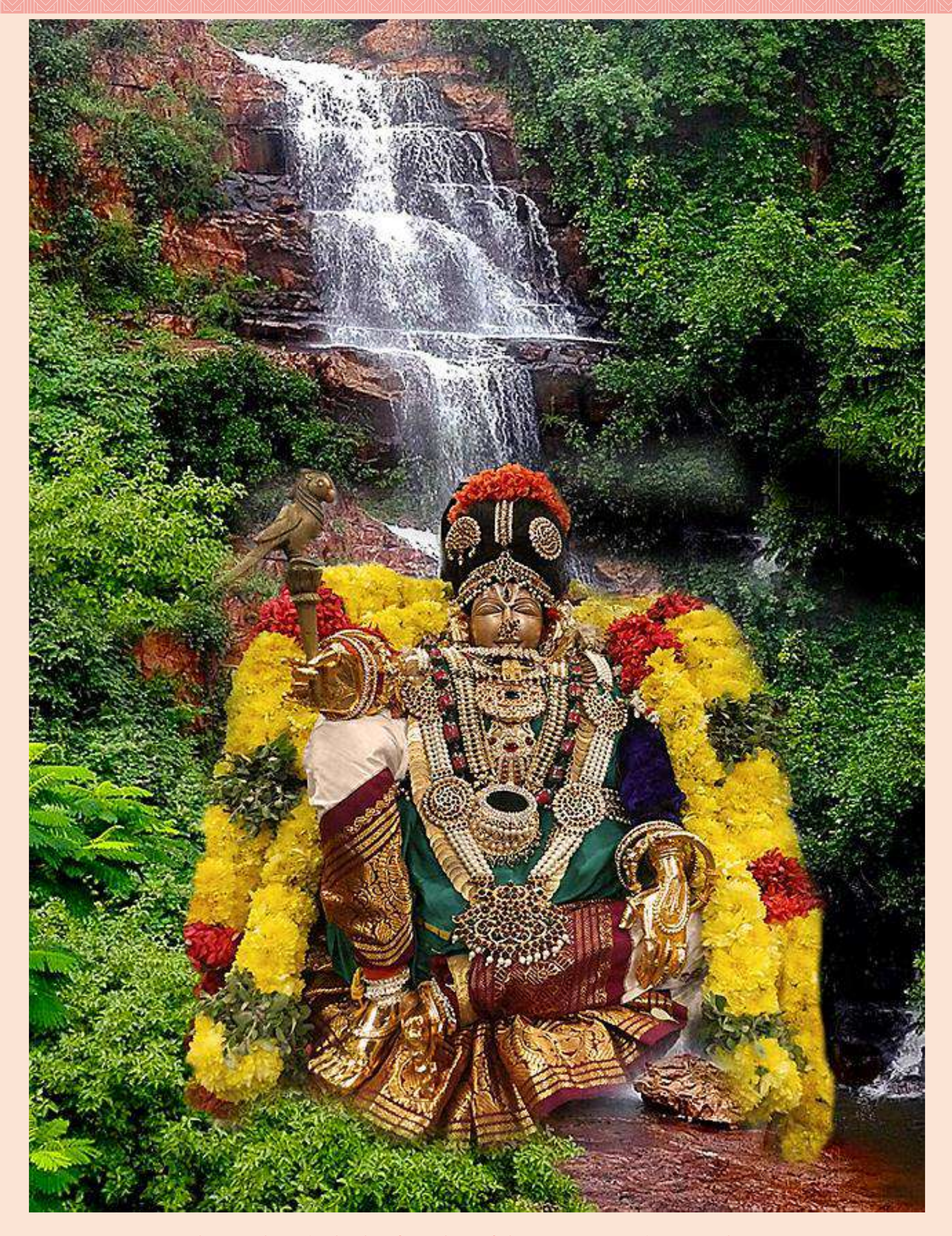
Meaning: "Amma I need a special favor from you! To this Thayar says "What is it you need? I am happy to grant." In response Svami Desikan implores "I am about to begin glorifying Lord Devanatha. You need to help by making sure that He hears this in the manner of a father delighting in the lisping talk of his child."

In a like manner, here the tribute is for Daya gunam of Lord Srinivasa and Svami Desikan requests Thayar's help to ensure that the lord hears this tribute. Another noteworthy point is that Thayar plays a dual role here. One as the mother of the universe and the other as an Acharya. In her Acharya role, she confers the boon of j~nanam on all sentient beings in the universe as evidenced by caitanya stanyadAyini tribute. What is the knowledge that Thayar bestows? 1. Jivatma svarupam (2) paramatma svarupam (3) upaya svarupam (4) phala svarupam (5) phala virodhi. These are known as Artha panchakam. Mahalakshmi most graciously bestows this upon the sentient beings.

In the Raghuvamsam, Kalidasa declares – prajAnAM vinayAdhAnAd rakShaNAd bharaNAdapi | sa pitA pitarastAsAM kevalaM janmahetavaH ||

Meaning: It is the duty of one's father to impart good practices to their children. Otherwise, it is a failure on the part of the father. It is the duty of the father to perform poshaNam (protection) of his children in times of trouble. King Dileepa performed these functions to perfection.

In the Ramayanam, when Sita Piratti was in captivity, Ravana approached her during the last part of the night and threatened her with dire consequences if she did not accept his overture and offer of being the empress of his many wives. At that time, Sita Piratti places a blade of grass between her and Ravana to ensure separation and advises him "Go and be-friend Rama. This will ensure your well-being." She deliberately avoided the use of Saranagati to Rama since it would hurt Ravana's ego. Therefore, in her role as the mother of the universe she only had Ravana's well-being at heart even though he was committing grave apacharam through his words and deeds. Hence, she epitomizes karuNa.



Thayar plays dual role of Mother of the Universe and as an Acharya!

Svami Desikan in Nacchiyar Thirukkolam

The salutation of samasta jananIm can also be appreciated from Sri Parashara Bhattar's Gunaratnakosham salutation

"piteva tvatpreyAn janani paripUrnAgasi jane

hitasrotovrittyA bhavati ca kadAcit kaluShadhIH |

kimetannirdoShaH ka iha jagatIti tvamucitaiH

upAyairvismArya svajanayasi mAtA tadasi naH ||"

Sambodhanam here is Janani - progenitor. Your husband, Lord Narayana is the father of the universe, who only has in mind what is good for his children in the long run (hitam). If corrective disciplinary action is needed, he would administer it. For the father, if the child arrives replete with a mountain-pile of sins/flaws, the Lord himself begins to wonder about the appropriate course of corrective disciplinary actions to reform the child. At this juncture Thayar intervenes and asks of the Lord "What is the problem? Why are you worried about punishing this jivan? Is there anyone that has not sinned? Some may have committed more sins than others? However, the fact remains that all of them have sinned! Therefore, there is no point in administering light punishments. Instead the jivan needs to be forgiven and graced." In this manner Thayar causes the Lord to ignore the faults of his bhaktas. It must be noted that the omniscient Lord is fully aware of the faults committed but Thayar ensures through her pleading that the Lord ignores these transgressions. Instead She makes the Lord utter the statement "This is Our Child. We need to protect him." Hence the tribute of samasta jananIm vande. In this context, it becomes immaterial whether the Lord declares us to be His Child. On the other-hand through prati bhakthi to Svami Desikan, if Svami declares that this is *My Child*, it will automatically invoke the grace of the Divine Couple for they definitely will not ignore the recommendation of *Their Favorite Child*. The inner meaning is that Acharya anugraham is an unfailing means to obtaining Perumal anugraham. Vande is due to trikaraNam as well as several salient characteristics of Thayar. For example if an ailing child is given a choice between doctors - one offering bitter tasting medicine and painful injections as cure and another offering sweet tasting medicine, the child inevitably choses the latter. Therefore She is glorified by all. Svami Desikan salutes her as shreyasIm shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNim. She brings shreyas to the Lord Himself! Here it must be appreciated that a gunam or rasam can be appreciated only in a life form or a thing that contains the rasam. In this instance Daya is a gunam. If this is to be captured in a live form it is absolutely Thayar. It may be asked, the Lord too is compassionate so why not the Lord's KaruNa? Svami Desikan answers this beautifully in the statement, nigraham

(punishment) and anugraham (daya) are samAnAdhikaraNam (equally present) in the Lord. However, nigraham is non-existent when it comes to Thayar, who exclusively exudes compassion. Therefore, if a live form were to be provided to the Daya guNam, it is exclusively Thayar."

Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachar Svamin's anubhavam is quoted next:

This and the succeeding two verses salute the three consorts of the Lord, namely Sri Devi, BhU Devi, and Neela Devi.

If one personifies Goddess as a mother, the elementary duty of a mother is made apparent. She breast-feeds the baby. It is a unique relationship of closeness, affection, and mutual love. Here Thayar has to breast-feed. She is glorified here as feeding the baby with the milk of sentient wisdom.

She is the hallmark of affluence, auspices, and superiority to Srinivasa. Without Her He loses his stature! This is implied by the shreyasIm shrInivasasya tribute.

The roles of the three consorts is specific. Mahalakshmi is verily the embodiment of Karuna quality."



Slokam 7

वन्दे वृषगिरीशस्य महिषीं विश्व धारिणीम्।

तत्कृपा प्रतिघातानां क्षमया वारणं यया ॥७ ॥

vande vR^iShagirIshasya mahiShIM vishva dhaariNIm |

tat krupaa pratighaataanaaM kShamayaa vaaraNaM yayaa || 7



We begin with the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "In the 7th and 8th verses Svami Desikan glorifies Bhumi Devi and Neela Devi in the spirit of Sri Bhashyakarar's Saranagati Gadyam salutation "evam bhUta bhUminILaa nAyaka!". First the glorification is for Bhumi Devi. hrIscate lakShmIsca patnyau aho rAtre pArshve nakShatrANi rUpam is the Vedam salutation that glorifies the role of Bhumi Piratti as the consort of Lord Narayana. Svami Desikan salutes Bhumi Piratti here as vande vriShagirIshasya mahiShIm vishvadhAriNIm. First of she is the consort of the Lord Srinivasa. Next she supports/bears the entire universe. In the Bhu stuti, Svami Desikan outlines the many names that are used to salute Bhumi Piratti-

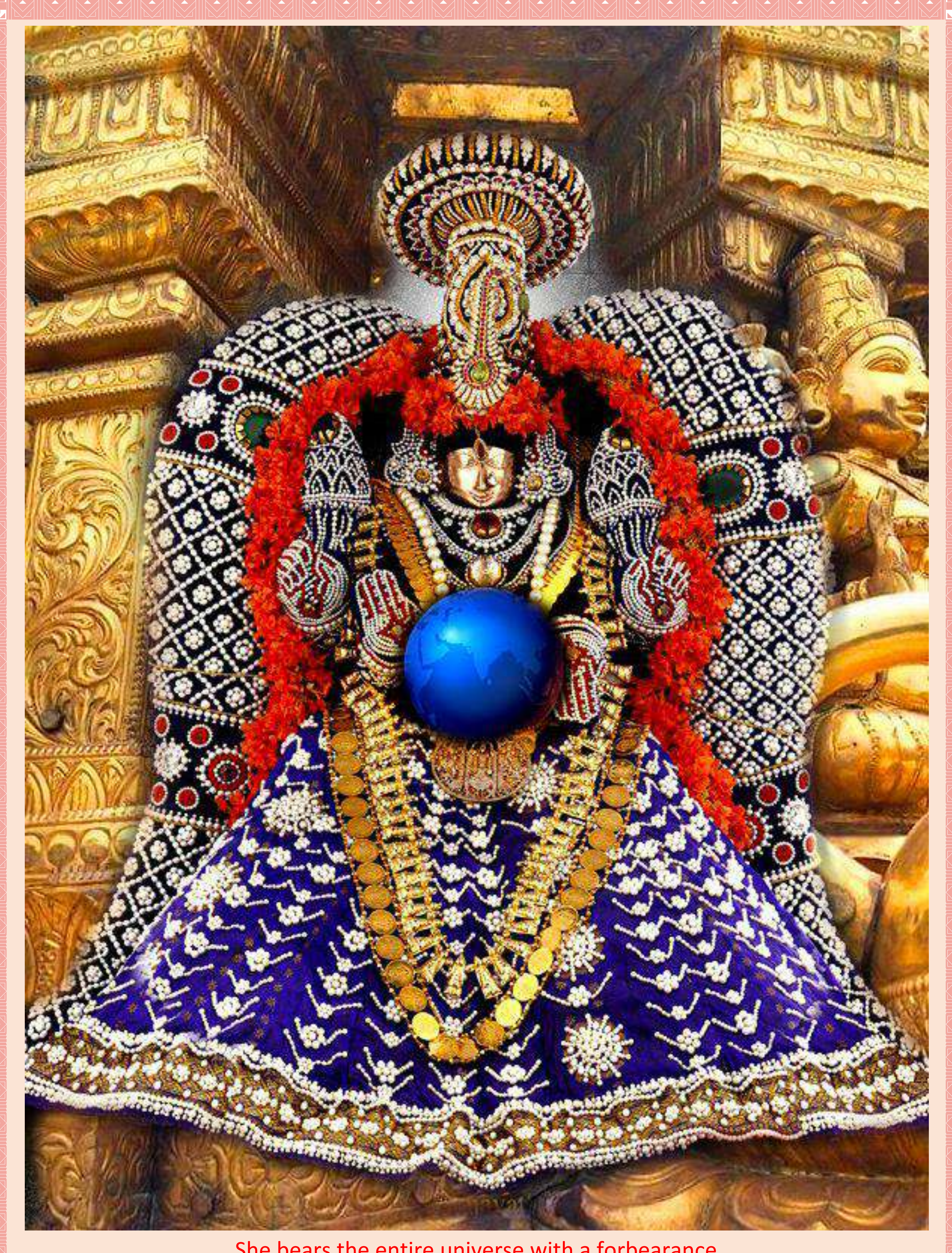
sarvaM sahetyavaniritya caleti mAtaH

vishvambaretivipuletivasundhareti |

anyAni cAnya vimukhAnyabhidhAna vruttyA

nAmAnyamUni kathayanti tavAnubhAvam||

VishvadhAriNi is the usage picked by Svami Desikan in this verse among the many names. What is the mahopakaram performed by Bhumi Devi? It is one of extreme compassion. We may remember that Svami Desikan is inviting an elite audience in the Sabha for delivery of the Daya Satakam tribute. Since Bhumi Piratti is an epitome of compassion, she is a fitting guest of honor in this Sabha. The Daya-flow of Lord Srinivasa could encounter obstacles in its path. The recipient may not then get the Daya of the Lord. In this context the role of Bhumi Piratti is to ensure the removal of these obstacles and facilitate the unimpeded flow of Srinivasa-Daya. Lord Srinivasa is looking for an excuse to confer his Daya-flow on all. He is constantly wondering "why is this jivan not offering salutations with folded hands to seek me and be the beneficiary of the Daya-flow?" The only thing that is coming in the way of the jivan receiving the Daya-flow is the accumulated sin-pile over countless births, which resembles a mountain.



She bears the entire universe with a forbearance

Once this sin-pile is destroyed the grace of Srinivasa-Daya is automatically conferred. Here is where Bhumi Devi comes to the rescue. She is known as Kshama-forbearance. She intercedes on behalf of the jivan and requests the Lord to forgive the sins of the jIvan and ensures the obstruction-free flow of Srinivasa-Daya. yayA kshamayA tat krupA pratighAtAnAm vAraNam (That Kshama, which removes the cause of obstruction of the Srinivasa-Daya flow is expounded upon here) is the key salutation, which glorifies this role of Bhumi Piratti."

Anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svami is quoted next "I pay obeisance to the Consort Bhumi Devi, of Lord Srinivasa. She bears the entire universe with a forbearance. The favor she confers upon us is that she removes the obstacles that may be placed in the flow-path of Karuna from the Lord. How could these obstacles arise? We commit offenses now and then.

The Lord grins and throbs the brows in disapproval. We then may not secure his grace. Then Bhumi Devi-very appropriately referred to as Kshama/forbearance intercedes and pleads with Him to ensure that He ignores our offense.

1. To see this in proper context, it is helpful to also read the Bhu Stuti commentary by the celebrated author.
2. She is by nature forbearing. Hence, she is a good pleader to persuade the Lord to forgive our offenses.
3. Incidentally, this is not meant to take the verse to mean liberal licentiousness! Surely Bhumi devi will help when we deserve."



Slokam 8

निशामयतु मां नीळा यद्भोग पटलैर्ध्रुवम्।

भावितं श्रीनिवासस्य भक्त दोषेष्वदर्शनम्॥ ८॥

nishAmayatu mAM nILA yadbhoga paTalaiH dhruvam|

bhAvitaM shrInivAsasya bhakta doSheShvadarshanam || 8



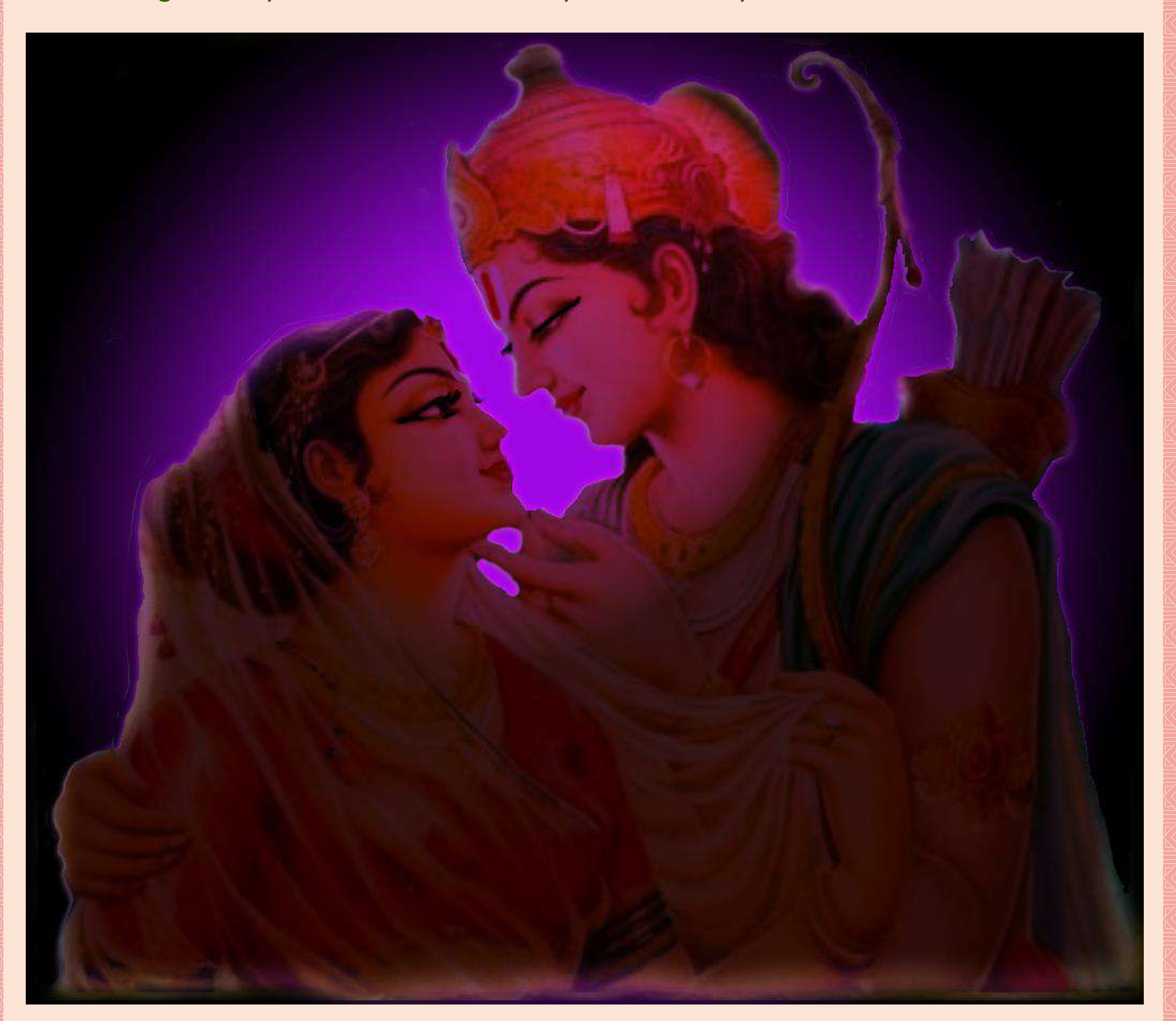
Next the glorification of Neela Devi follows. Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin notes "Each one among Sri Devi, Bhu Devi and Neela Devi has a specific role. The sambodhanam is mAm nILa nishAmayatu. Why is Svami Desikan specifically requesting the merciful glances of NeeLa Devi? It is with the sole purpose of making sure the NeeLa Devi intercedes on behalf of the baddha jivan to obscure the faults of the jivan from the view of Lord Srinivasa. It is entirely for bhaktadoShEShu adarshanam bhAvitam shrinivAsasya. If an item is forbidden from viewing, it will invariably be seen. For example, in the Srirangam Temple upon exiting Thayar Sannidhi, there is an icon of Jyeshta Lakshmi or MuDevi, who is regarded as the older sister of Mahalakshmi and stands for everything inauspicious. The aideeham is that if one views this Jyeshta Lakshmi after a darsanam of Thayar, all benefits from Thayar darsanam become nullified. Therefore, this must be avoided at all costs." Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin notes that he himself upon becoming aware of this fact found alternate exit points so that the darsanam of Jyeshta Lakshmi after Thayar darsanam is entirely avoided. Svami continued "In a like manner, when it comes to Lord Srinivasa, his gaze is bound to fall on the forbidden item, i.e., the sin-pile of the supplicant. He is glorified in the Purusha Suktam Rk as sahasrashIrShA puruShaH sahasrAkSha sahasrapAt. Therefore, having these many (1000) eyes, it is impossible for the sin-pile to stay hidden from his view. Here is where the salutation yadbhogapaTalaiH comes into play. Vaidya Shastram (Science of medicine) declares that if one is engaged in bhogam, eye trouble inevitably follows. Here is where Svami Desikan requests Neela Devi, that the Lord engaged in bhogam with NeeLa Devi should develop a cataract of sorts causing him to ignore the sin-pile.

nILA-tunga sthanagiri-taTI suptam udbodhya kR^iShNam

pArArthyam svaM shruti-sata-shiras-siddham adhyApayantI

svocchishTAyAm sraji nigaLitam yA balAtkrutya bhunkte

godA tasyai nama idamidam bhUya evAstu bhUyaH



Due to NeeLa Devi's bhoga mayam, she makes EmperumAn ignore the sin-pile of the supplicant. The Lord being the omniscient one, has a namam in the Vishnu Sahasranamam as avijnAta, i.e., the ignorant one. This does not mean that he truly is ignorant. He merely displays this ignorance due to the persuasion of Nappinai or NeeLa Piratti. She alone is capable of effecting this transformation. Lord KrishNa took the avataram itself to win the hand of Nappinai Piratti. In this context, it is helpful to quote Periya Azhwar's svarasya anubhavam –

pooNith thozhuvinil pukkup puzhudhi aLaintha ponmEni,

kaaNap peridhum ugakkum aagilum kaNdaar pazhippar,

naaNeththanaiyum ilaadhaai **nappinnai kaaNil sirikkum**,

maaNikkamE en maNiyE manjanam aada nee vaaraai



SrI, BhUmi, NeeLa Devi sameta SrI AkkArakkani PerumAL - TirukkaDikai

Here Periya Azhwar enjoys Kannan in the manner of Yashoda enjoying Krishna. The Azhwar declares "Your body covered in dirt is PonmEni (Golden body). However, others may chide the child for being dirty therefore, please come for your ceremonial snAnam. Let alone others who may chide you Nappinai will laugh at you in ridicule. For this reason alone, please come and engage in your ceremonial bath." Kannan is delighted with this argument of the Azhwar and engages in the ceremonial bath. The inner meaning is that Lord KrishNa will do anything for the

pleasure of Nappinai (NeeLa devi). Therefore, he is bound to ignore the sin-pile of the supplicant due to the grace of NeeLa devi."

Next, we enjoy the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachar Svamin "May NeeLa shed Her gracious glance on me! That would help me survive and secure the Lord's forgiveness and grace. As in the mundane world, a mother's plea, intervention and impact will help the child receive forgiveness and encouragement; there being three mothers to us in Mahalakshmi, Bhumi and NeeLa, we have added benefit.

NeeLa has a special virtue; she takes liberties with Him and sports many delectable activities. These delight the Lord; a layer of screen-a tear-film-spreads on His eyes so to say. He perhaps feigns such a visual defect!

I have to pay homage to NeeLa who thus makes me acceptable to the Lord.

1. May she bless me with Her Daya look-then He will not see my faults.
2. Bhavitam has the suggestive meaning that the Lord feigns a visual incapacity.
3. All ethos in these verses are of the nature of Daya-praise. One ought not to develop a serious impression about the Lord's indulgence, the sportfulness of consorts, the Lord becoming blind to our sins, etc.
4. All in all, the entire hymn is to tickle our heart with regard to the Daya Gunam of the Lord.
5. It is helpful to recall the tribute of KoorathAzhvAn on NeeLa Devi in the Sri VaikunTasthava verse 82

   bhAvairudAra madhuraiH vividhair vilAsaiH

   bhrU-vibhrama-smita kaTAkSha-nirIkShaNaiH ca |

   yA tvanmayI, tvamapi yanmaya yeva,

   sA mAm nILA nitAntaM urarIkurutAm udAraa || 62

   May Neela engage me in Her service, She who by Her majestic and sweet disposition, by Her various passions displayed by Her love-play, by brow-raising, gentle smile, seductive eye-glance is equal to You. This Neela Devi is no different from You and from whom You are no different, that bounteous consort of Yours agree to engage me in Her service in the Vaikunta world.
6. It may also be helpful to recall the Tiruppavai taniyan in this regard.

7. Does the Lord close his eyes when a pious devotee commits an offence? It may superficially appear so. Svami Desikan's stand is patent and ought to be reiterated from the Srimad RahasyatrayasAram. "He is actually omniscient; He sees all; He only refrains from a mood of meting out a punishment when the individual is a pious bhakta. Who can question Him in this matter?""

It is also helpful to summarize the anubhavam of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan Svami for verses 6-8. "The Lord looks at NeeLa Devi only to see her verily spread a white veil to obscure the sin-pile of the supplicant from His view. Angered by this act he turns to Bhumi Devi, who implores that the supplicant's sins be forgiven and therefore impediments to the Daya-flow are removed. Perhaps somewhat becalmed by the appeal of Bhumi Devi, He remains indifferent to the plight of the jivan. However, Sri Devi cannot tolerate this indifference towards her suffering children. Therefore, when the Lord turns to Sri Devi, She argues that indeed the supplicant has sinned. However, these sins need to be overlooked and he must be made a receptacle for Your Daya-flow. Bound thus, by the appeal from Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi, and Neela Devi, the Lord confers his grace on the supplicant."





The benevolent Lord touched Dhruva's cheek with His Panchajanya conch

Slokam 9

कमप्यनवधीं वन्दे करुणा वरुणालयम् ।

वृषशैल तटस्थानां स्वयं व्यक्तिमुपागतम् ॥ ९ ॥

kamapyanavadhIM vande karuNA varuNAlayam |

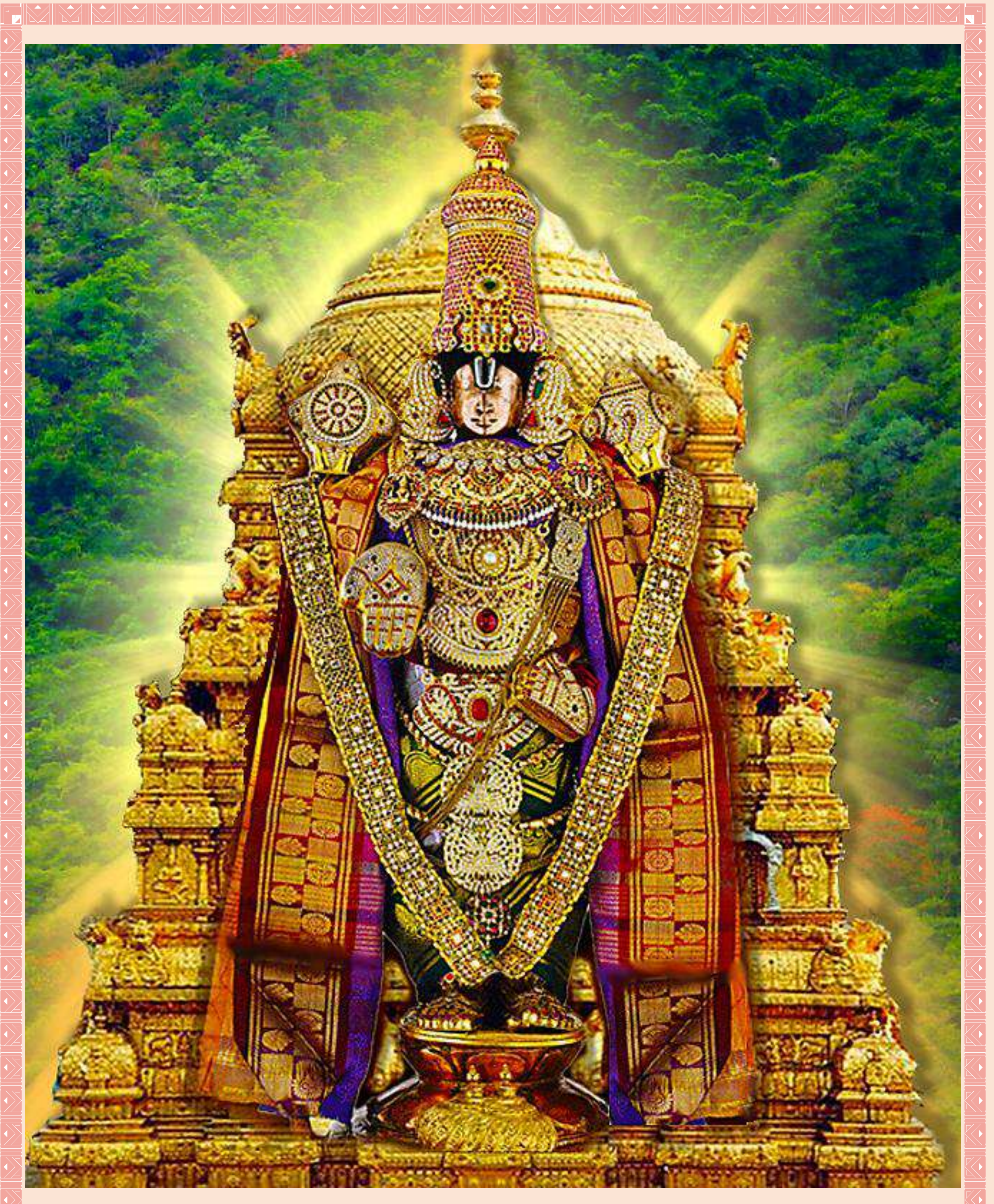
vR^iShashaila taTasthAnAM svayaM vyaktiM upAgatam ||9



First, the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin is quoted "In the previous verse, the role of Neela Devi in securing the grace of Lord Srinivasa was highlighted. Now it comes to the turn of glorifying the Lord. Svami Desikan, known for his poetic prowess is now at a loss for what aspect of the Lord to glorify, i.e., svarupam (Divya Mangala Vigraham), vibhuti, or gunam, which are abundant, unceasing, and almost in competition with each other to be glorified. This is also Svami's plight as exemplified by the Yatiraja Saptati salutation "kamapyAdyam gurum vande". When the young child Dhruva was engaged in Tapas, he was lost in dhyanam of the Lord through the dvadasakshara mantram, which was received by way of instruction from sage Narada. Pleased with his Tapas the when the Lord appeared before him, Dhruva was rendered speechless by the magnificence of the Lord and was at a loss for words. Realizing his plight, the benevolent Lord touched Dhruva's cheek with his Panchajanya conch. Immediately Dhruva renders an astonishing tribute to the Lord. In a like manner, Svami Desikan is graced here by Daya Devi with the reassurance "I am there for you. Please proceed with your glorification." to commence his tribute of the Lord. Svami commences his tribute with the salutation karuNa varuNAlayam. When Lord Srinivasa goes on utsavam he is in his full glory with beautiful ornaments, at which point even ordinary mortals wonder "what aspect of the Lord should we appreciate and focus our salutation. Should we glorify his beauty, or the ornaments, or the parishkarams that accompany the Lord? Or should the focus be on the ladies, who fill the Mada street during utsavam with kolattam and the like in their anubhavam of the Lord? Or should we take in aisvaryam of the blending of the Mada street with the background of the Hill which makes it impossible to discern whether it is day or night? Or should we appreciate the 4 directions of the Mada veethi jam-packed with bhagavatas, who out of intense bhakthi have lined up to submit their offerings in the form of karpura neerajanam to the Lord with the accompaniment of the

Govinda Govinda chant? Or should we appreciate the Lord's samAsrityam, whereby he equally graces common people as well as the Nitya Suris, who come down to seek his blessings at Tiruvenkatam? MaNi pon mutthalaIkkum is the salutation from Svami NammAzhvar that should be referenced here. Vedam commenced its tribute but realizing that the Lord was beyond comprehension stopped with the tribute yato vAco nivartante aprApya manasA saha. In the Varadaraja Panchasat, Svami Desikan salutes Lord Varadaraja as muhyantyabhanguradhiyo muni sArvabhaumAH reflecting the plight of great sages, who sought to glorify Lord Varadaraja but were simply stupefied by the magnitude of the task and instead were absorbed in a moham of his magnificence." In a like manner Svami Desikan is befuddled as he contemplates what aspect of the Lord needs to be glorified. At this juncture, Daya Devi comes to his rescue with the assurance "Fear not. I am by your side. Please commence your tribute now." Therefore, Svami Desikan deems it most appropriate to commence the tribute with the name of Daya Devi in the manner of "karuNa varuNAlayam". An ocean is conceived here. For this there needs to be water. Needless to say the ocean water will be salty. However, can this be an appropriate glorification for the Lord? No. Therefore, Svami Desikan introduces the beautiful karuNa rasam for the ocean waters here. The Lord's karuNa is in the form of the ocean. That which is the ashrayam for karuNa is apt to be glorified. Then Svami Desikan wonders about the suitable description for this ocean. Commonly encountered oceans can be precisely measured in terms of their breadth and depth. However, the Lord's karuNa ocean is immeasurable as described by the salutation anavadhim (transcending space and time), all pervading (in terms of being found in all vastus), beyond description by words, larger than the largest, smaller than the smallest. The Lord of such magnificence is described as the ocean in this instance. This ocean contains a number of hills. However, this karuNa samudram is seated on top of the seven hills as described by the salutation vruShashaIla taTasthAnAn svayam vyaktim upAgatam. The Lord arrived here on his own accord. Some kshetrams have the Lord as the archa murti due to penance undertaken by Rishis, whereas in other places, he is consecrated by Bhagavatas. However, in places like Srirangam and Tirumalai the Lord arrived on his own accord and hence these are known as svayam vyakta kshetrams. Here an important question arises pertaining to the arrival of the Lord. Is it meant only to grace those in the vicinity of the Seven Hills? Svami Desikan affirms that this is merely an upalakshanam meant for gracing the whole universe. The reference here is the tribute viNNavarum maNNavarum virumbum verpE. This is not meant exclusively for Nityasuris but also for akinchanas (those who are totally incapable and entirely

reliant upon the Lord for salvation). vrusShashalla taTasthAnam svayam vyaktim. Here the inner meaning is that the Lord is forever available for darsanam at the Seven Hills to anyone that comes seeking him. During one instance, Chaturmukha Brahma thought to himself "The Lord is my father. I can get his darsanam at any time." When this occurred Brahma could not get a darsanam of the Lord. Therefore, he adopts tapas at Pushkar. Right there, the Lord provides a darsanam in the form of Pushkarani but is invisible to the eyes. From there Brahma moves to Naimisaranyam, but there too the Lord is in the form of the forest but Brahma could not realize the forest was none other than the Lord himself. Filled with grief, as a last resort Brahma comes to Kanchipuram and performed the asvamedha yajnam to get pratyaksham of the Lord. When such was the travail of Brahma, what to speak of ordinary mortals? Out of His extreme compassion for ordinary mortals, the Lord decided to take the form of the archa murti of Srinivasa. How can this be explained? The Upanishad waxes eloquent about this through the salutation avij~nAtam vijAnatAm vij~nAtam avijAnatAm. One may think on the basis of undergoing extensive kalAkshepam that they are familiar with the svarupam, rupam, gunams of Emperuman and therefore, understands Him very well. However, such a person does not know anything about the Lord. On the other hand, one who approaches the Lord with the mindset "I know nothing. I am completely ignorant about his svarUpam, rUpam, guNam, vibhUti, or his being j~nAnamayam and Anandamayam. It is only His feet that give me refuge and protect me. This is the only thing that I contemplate upon." Such a person is surely knowledgeable about the Lord and is the beneficiary of His paripurna anugraham. One who perfunctorily seeks Perumal sevai merely because he has planned everything to the minutest detail and thinks that there can be no other obstacles to his plans, invariably fails in the attempt to get the darsanam of the Lord. Even if all plans are in place, something unexpected will invariably come in the way and preclude the sevai. Only one who approaches the Lord with the mindset "It is entirely your grace on account of which, I have the bhagyam of Your sevai" is inevitably graced by the Lord and most unexpectedly lands up with beautiful sevai. Therefore, the Upanishad tribute of avijnAtam vijAnatAm vij~nAtam avijAnatAm is most appropriate for Lord Srinivasa. This Srinivasa is saluted as svayam vyaktim upagatam. anavadhim karuNa varuNalayam vande. In this manner Svami Desikan completes the glorification of guru parampara starting from Azhvars, Acharyas all the way to Perumal. Now that Svami Desikan has completed this task, his audience in the exalted sabha is wondering "What next?" This is answered by Svami Desikan in the next verse."



The Lord is forever available for darsanam at the Seven Hills to anyone that comes seeking him

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "I pay obeisance to that singular ocean of karuNa, unique in having no limits to its dimension, the Lord Srinivasa, standing at the top of the Hill, to voluntarily grant the vision to the Hill-people, for which purpose He came to the Hill.

1. People did not, do not, have to make efforts to search for Him and see Him. He has of his own accord come and stationed himself at the Hill top.
2. He is figuratively described as the Ocean of KaruNa. The Hill-people can easily see Him even as they can see an ocean if it were at the hill-foot.
3. His voluntary coming and taking residence at the Hill top is indication of His Daya in respect of Hill residents."



Slokam 10

अकिञ्चन निधिं सूतिं अपवर्ग त्रिवर्गयोः ।

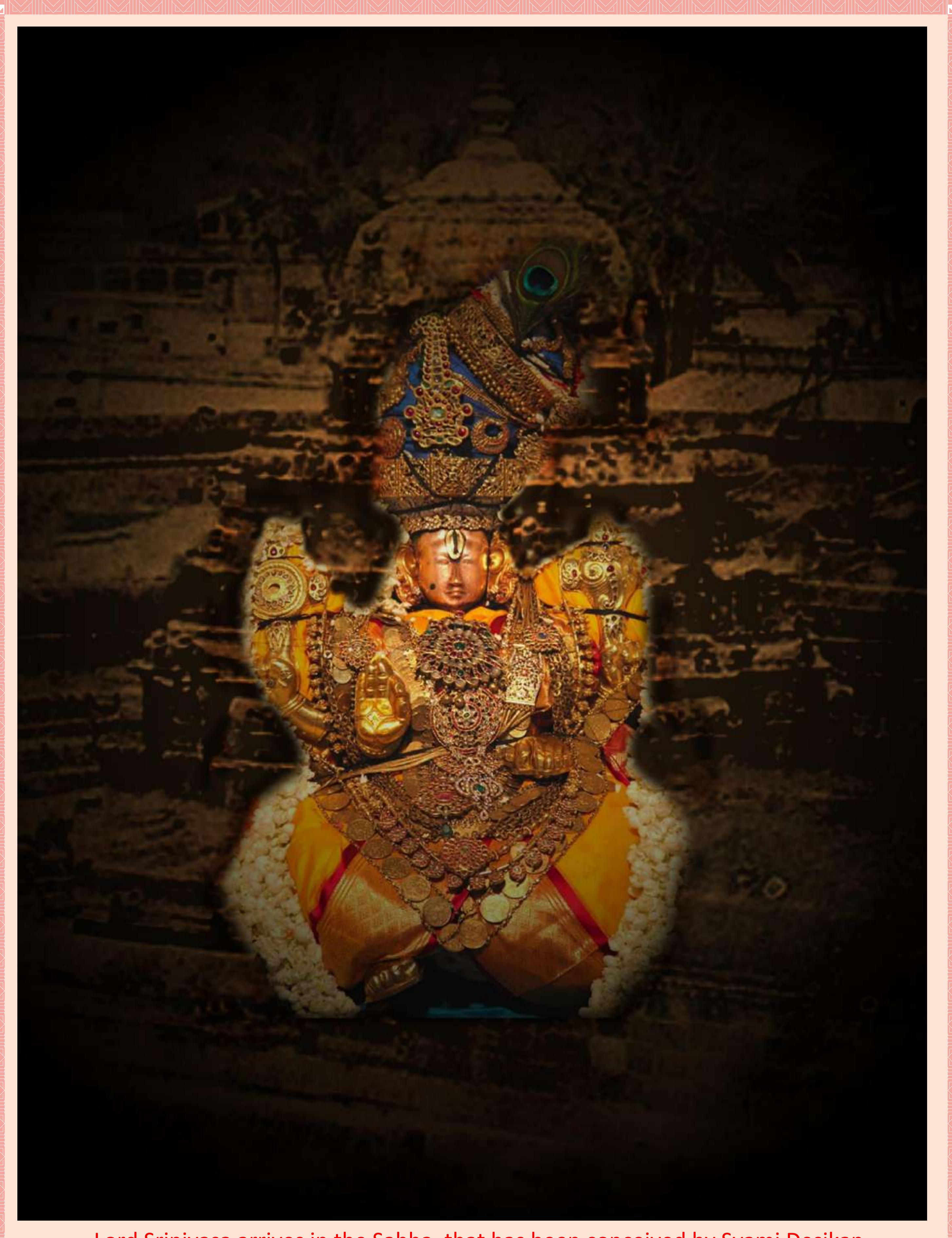
अञ्जनाद्रीश्वर दयाम् अभिष्टौमि निरञ्जनाम् ॥ १० ॥

aki~njana nidhiM sUtiM apavarga trivargayoH |

a~njanaadrIshvara dayaam abhiShTaumi nira~njanaam ||10



The anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin is quoted first "Lord Srinivasa arrives in the Sabha, that has been conceived by Svami Desikan. Normally, emperor's court has protocols and formalities. Once the emperor arrives and takes his high seat, proceedings in the Sabha can commence. Accordingly, Lord Srinivasa now addresses Svami Desikan, "Svami since you wanted to render a tribute you may commence it now. Are you not going to glorify me now?" To this, Svami Desikan responds, indeed I render a tribute, but it is not for you (abhiShTaumi). Instead it is for Daya Devi (daya abhiShTaumi i). Lord Srinivasa looks enquiringly at Svami Desikan and asks "Do you plan to glorify Daya? It is after all a gunam. Even granting this, whose Daya do you plan to glorify? Would it be the Daya of Lord Narayana in Nitya Vibhuti, or would it be the Daya in the Vibhava avataras of Rama and Krishna? Or would it be the Daya of archa murtis in places like Srirangam?" Svami Desikan answers "It is none of these. I shall render my tribute to the Daya of anjanAdrishvara. anjanAdrIshvaradayAm abhiShTaumi." The Lord pursues this further and asks Svami "What is so special about the anjanAdri?" To this query Svami Desikan responds with the reply "My master, you yourself have described the glory of anjanAdri in Your Rama avataram" To this the Lord enquires further "What is it that I said?" Svami Desikan responds "Oh Lord, when you sent the swan with a message to Sita Piratti, you dwelt on the greatness of anjanAdri. agrebhAvI tvadanu nayane ranjayan anjanAdriH, namely, when the Swan is on its sojourn the very sight of the anjanAdri hill is soothing to the eyes and brings great joy. When a mere sight of the hill brings forth great joy, what to speak of an exposition that delves into the expanse of the anjanAdri hill? Therefore, I render my tribute to the Daya of anjanAdrishvara (Lord Srinivasa)" The Lord responds "So be it. You have decided to glorify Daya. Should I hear this tribute?"



Lord Srinivasa arrives in the Sabha, that has been conceived by Svami Desikan

To this Svami Desikan responds “Definitely my Lord. You have to hear this tribute, because it is not something that I have conceived on my own. I am merely following the path of great masters before me.” The reference here is to Sri Bhattar’s tribute to the Divine Couple of Srirangam. The stotram, Sri Gunaratna Kosam, is in praise of Ranganayaki Thayar. The ninth verse of this stotram addresses Lord Ranganatha as:

shriyaH! shrIH! shrIrangeshaya! tava cha hrudyAM bhagavatIM

shriyaM tvattopyucchairvayamiha phaNAmaH shruNutarAm|

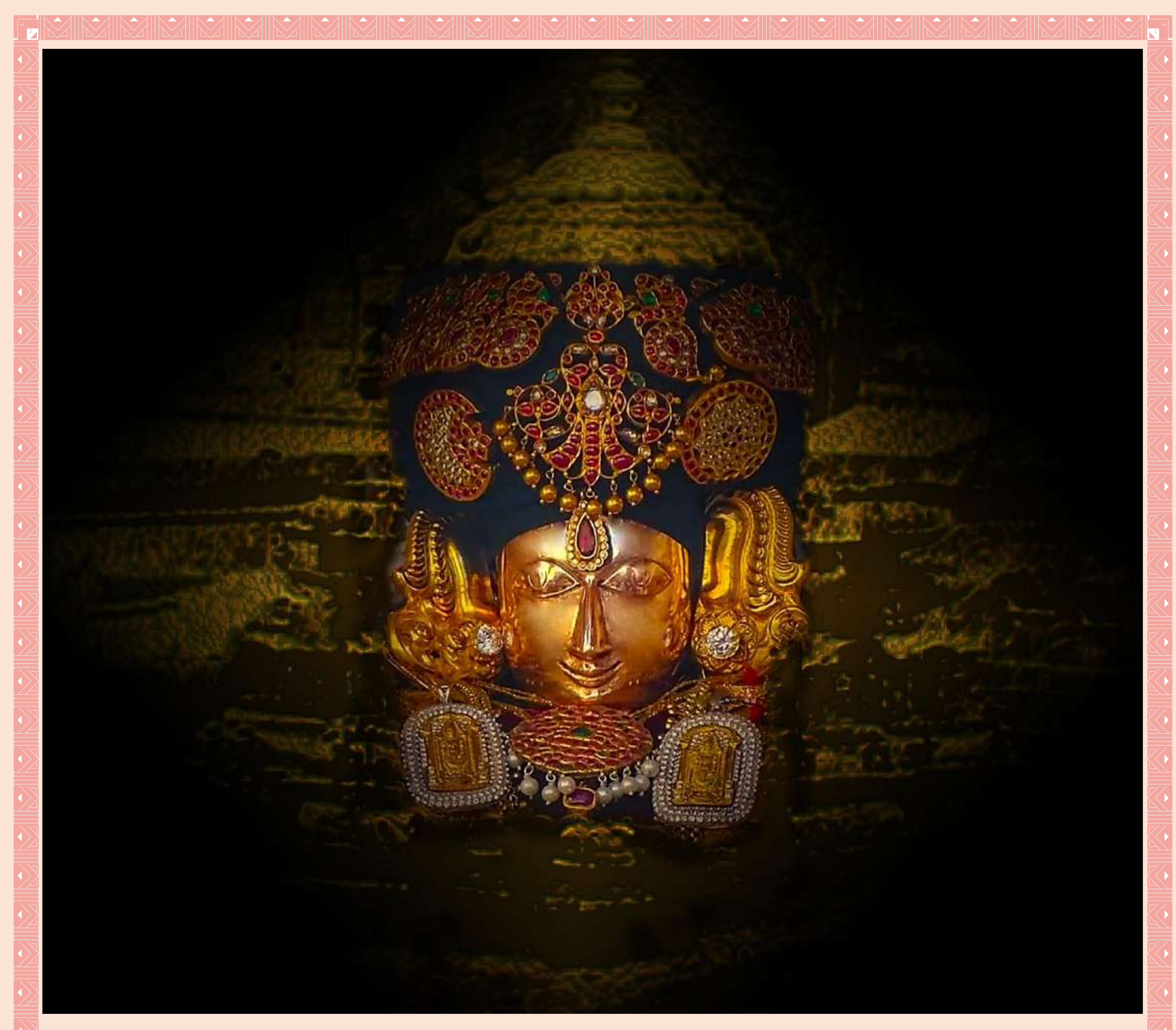
drushau te bhUyAstAM sukhataralatAre shravaNataH

punarhaShotkarShAt sphuTatu bhujayoH kanchukashatam ||

Here Sri Parashara Bhattar declares to Lord Ranganatha that he will be glorifying Thayar. The manner of glorification will be louder than the glorification of You. Here the Lord is approached with the intent of requesting his presence and hearing the glorification of his consort. The usual response is glorify my bhArya to your heart’s content, I shall move away. However, Sri Bhattar insists that the Lord remain in that very place to hear the glorification of His consort. Feigning indifference, the Lord says let me turn away you can proceed with your tribute. Sri Bhattar responds “No. The tribute to Thayar will be several fold louder than the tribute to you.” The Lord responds “I shall block my ears with cotton balls. You may proceed.” To this, Sri Bhattar pleads “No my Lord, you need to hear this tribute attentively with no impediments to your ears. Who is She? Your most beloved, one who resides in your Vakshasthalam. You must take in this tribute with full enjoyment reflected by delight in your eyes so much so that they reach to your ears and ask Does Thayar have such limitless glory? Hearing this tribute, you will be overjoyed so much so that your body swells up, stretching the limits of all adorning dresses. Therefore, you must hear this tribute.” In a like manner, Svami Desikan states that he has assembled the Sabha replete with distinguished attendees including Perumal with the sole of objective glorifying Daya Devi and requests the Lord to hear his tribute. Normally, glorification of another distinguished personage in the presence of a distinguished person is never taken kindly. In this instance even though the glorification is about one who is extremely dear to Lord Srinivasa, the Lord enquires of Svami Desikan “You plan to glorify Daya Devi. What is the visesham about Daya Devi?” To this Svami Desikan responds “Oh Lord! You act appropriately in accordance with the moment. At times you set out to punish individuals. However, Daya Devi is constantly engaged in showering her grace and blessing me.

Therefore, I glorify Her." There is an aidhihyam here. A great mahan, who was quite poor, wanted to come to Tirumalai and have the darshan of the Lord. Since this was his only opportunity, he planned to spend a week at Tirumalai and enjoy the vaibhavam of Lord Srinivasa. Somehow or another, each day he was denied the darshan, while other wealthier folks readily obtained the darshan. Enraged by this, he declared "Oh Lord! You have become quite conceited on account of the tremendous flow of wealth in your coffers. Therefore, you are blind to my plight. However, remember that when someone unaware of your glory declares that you are a commoner, it is I that will remind them through the Vedam declaration that you are avApta samasta kaman, akhila heya pratyanIkan. You are resplendent with the effulgent Sudarshana Chakra. You are the one who is declared to be hiranya smashru and hiranya kesha. Do not forget this!" Immediately, the Lord sent his archakas after this mahan with the request to have darshan with full honors. From this it is clear that the Daya gunam of the Lord was responsible for this change of heart on the part of the Lord. Therefore, the Daya gunam is given a concrete form and saluted by Svami Desikan.

Previously Svami Desikan had referred to the Lord as karuNa varuNAlayam, namely, the ocean of Mercy. The ocean has gems hidden in it. How can anyone know the hidden gems? How would Svami Desikan be able to glorify these and the ocean? In this regard, it needs to be understood that the very sight of the ocean is pleasing. The crashing waves of the ocean against the shore have a calming effect on the waves in the mind. Therefore, Svami Desikan declares that he will salute the karuNa varuNAlayam to the extent he can as per the salutation "abhiShTaumi". This is merely a reflection of Svami Desikan's humility, while in fact he salutes all salient aspects of Daya Devi. The reason for this is Daya Devi herself as documented in the tribute of verse 107 "janjhAmAruta dhUtachUtanayataH sAmpAtikoyaM kramaH" The grace of Daya Devi is such that the moment Svami Desikan settled upon her as the object of his tribute, She endowed him with knowledge pertaining to all Her salient aspects. This is known as kalekaposham nyAyam in the manner of birds which flock to grain and partake of it in entirety. Thus, came about the praise of anjanAdrIshvara dayAm. Anjana is the mother of Hanuman. This was the hill, where she resided. Here the tribute is for the Daya of the Lord of anjanAdri. It is for the mahishi, who is known as Daya Devi. How does this Daya Devi exist? Svami Desikan glorifies this as niranjanAm-one who is blemishless. niranjanam paramam sAmyam upaiti is how the Lord is glorified, i.e., the blemishless one, one who is unaffected by karma. In a like manner, Srinivasa's Daya too is blemishless! How can this be said with regards to Daya Devi? This comes about from the tribute akinchananidhim.



Daya Devi – The hidden gem of the Lord's Ocean of Mercy

She is the nidhi for those who are incapable of anything (no means to adopt upasanas prescribed for Bhakthi yogis). She is the one who graces these helpless, incapable ones and elevates them. She is the empress for those who seek the Lord's feet as their only recourse - such Daya Devi is saluted by Svami Desikan. In verse 46 of the Devanayaka Panchasat, Svami Desikan declares "ye janmakoTibhirupArjitashuddha dharmAH teShAM bhavaccharaNabhaktiratIva bhogyA". Due to the good (shuddha dharma) done over countless janmas, great ones develop intense Bhakthi for the Lord's feet". In a like manner, to even have the opportunity of sevai of Lord Srinivasa, one must have accumulated the shuddha

dharma from countless births. Only when such karma fructifies, would it even be possible to have the Lord's sevai at Tirumalai to the accompaniment of the namam Govinda! Govinda! This confers the benefit of achanchala bhakti (steadfast devotion) for Lord Srinivasa. In verse 47 of the Devanayaka Panchasat Svami Desikan states:

nishkinchanatva dhaninA vibudhesha yena

nyastaH svarakShaNabharastava pAda padme|

nanAvidha prathitayoga visheSha dhanyAH

nArhanti tasya shatakoTi tamAMshakakShyAm|

"I do not know what good I have done in what janma? However, I have a great wealth. This dhanam I submit to You my Lord. What is this dhanam? Inability to perform karma yogam jnAna yogam and bhakthi yogam but seek Your Feet as my sole refuge. I who possess this dhanam, have submitted the responsibility of my protection to Your Lotus Feet. Those who behave in this manner, even great yogis who have accumulated tapobalam over countless births do not measure up to a small fraction. Those who perform Saranagati to the Lord with paripurna vishvAsam, for them the nidhi is Daya Devi. I salute this Daya Devi" declares Svami Desikan. apavarga trivargayoH sUtim is the next question, namely for someone of the stature of Svami Desikan, who had mastered Vedanta, it is appropriate to engage in the stotram of Daya Devi. However, what about the countless common folk, yearning for the grace of Lord Srinivasa who wait in long lines sometimes for 48 hours without getting Sevai? What vedantam have they studied? How have they come to Tirumalai? Svami Desikan answers this through the statement that it is solely the grace of Daya Devi that has caused them to come to Tirumalai. The next question that arises is that these common folk have not studied any Vedanta and thus have no idea of the concept of Moksham. Why do they come to Tirumalai? Svami answers this through the tribute "trivargayoH". Namely, Daya Devi, who is capable of granting the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple through moksham, also confers the purusharthas of dharma, artha, and kama sought after by common folks. Therefore, they too yearn for the grace of Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that those who act righteously and desire anything be it wealth, putra prapti, educational progress, success in exams and a plethora of such requests, Lord Srinivasa's Daya unfailingly fulfills them. However, if one is rooted in adharma and seeks the Lord's blessings for dharma viruddha karyams such as stealing and offering 10% of the loot by way of sambhavanam to the Lord, such requests will

never be granted. This completes the summary of the first decad of Daya Satakam. It is the upodghAtam for the stotram-sort of an executive summary of the content. From the next decad Svami Desikan delves into the details of Daya Devi’s glory.”

Next, we quote from the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patracharia Svamin. I sing the praise, from all sides, completely too, of Daya of Srinivasa, who is the Lord of anjanAdri. The Daya quality is a treasure-trove to the destitute. Poor and helpless devotees can gain everything from this treasure. It can confer moksham and the three this-wordly gifts of Dharma-Artha-Kama. Not only does it confer from a ready stock; it can create, generate, produce anything to give to the destitute devotee The Daya quality is faultless; acting in a discriminatory manner would be termed a great stigma; No Daya is all-generous; it has no meanness; no smallness; it is all-generous without a fault. It is this Daya Devi I praise from now on.

1. There is a beauty in referring to the Hill of the Lord as anjanAdri. Why? The Lord is pictured as a treasure-trove. There is an upanishadic passage citing human weakness in not recognizing a treasure hidden in earth under one’s feet, walking over it, never discovering it-till a collyrium, an unguent, or anjanam is applied on one’s eyes. The Daya of the Lord of anjanAdri is a treasure of this nature needing an anjanam-application to discover the treasure. Also Daya is free from any stigma-niranjana.
2. Daya of the Lord can fulfill all our prayers. It can first of all grant us Moksha. It can also confer all worldly gifts. It is so potent; when it can grant Moksha why worry about earthly gifts? They will be conferred on mere asking.
3. There is a beauty in the word sUtim-meaning generation, creation etc. As sage Vishvamitra “created” a heaven for his disciple, Trishanku, the Lord’s Daya would create an artefact in respect to any craving from a devotee for the occasion. Not only She gives what is already existing and available, but She will generate, produce, create etc. what we ask for.”





SvAmi DeSikan in TAyAr tirukkOlam - Tirumala




SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 11 – 20)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy

A humble samarpanam to AcAryAs on the grand occasion of

SATAMANA MAHOTSAVAM

for

HH SrImad PaRavAkkOTTai PeriyANDavan

SrI GopAladeSika MahAdeSikan

(Sarvari samvatsara Panguni-Rohini)

Sri:





SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's



A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||

Slokam 11

अनुचर शक्त्यादि गुणां अग्रेसर बोध विरचितालोकाम्।

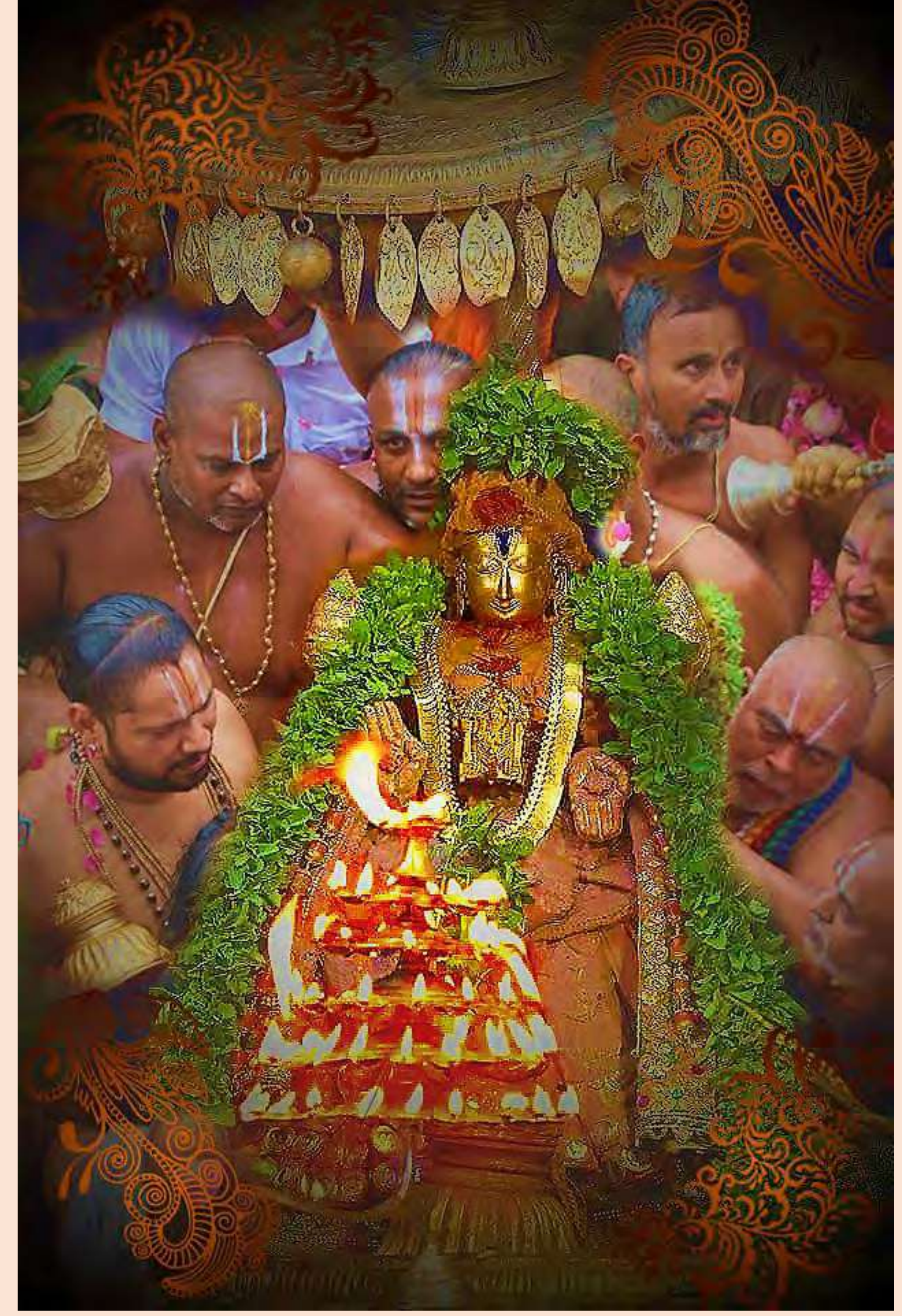
स्वाधीन वृषगिरीशां स्वयं प्रभूतां प्रमाणयामि दयाम्॥ ११ ॥

anucara shaktyAdi guNaaM agresara bodha virachitAlokAm|

svAdhIna vR^iShagirIshAM svayaM prabhUtAM pramANayAmi dayAm ||11



The anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin is quoted first. “Tribute to Daya commences directly now. Again the question is Daya is a gunam. It cannot exist in isolation and necessarily has to be associated with someone in order to be meaningful. In this instance the Daya gunam is associated with Lord Srinivasa. The one with who the gunam is associated is known as guni. In this instance guni is Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, it is only natural to ask why the gunam is glorified and the guni is left out. This can be answered through the statement, that without the Daya gunam the guni is devoid of fame. Therefore, due to its centrality to the guni, the Daya gunam is glorified. If so, Lord Srinivasa is endowed with innumerable kalyana gunams. Why is Daya gunam glorified to the exclusion of these other kalyana gunams? This Slokam addresses all of these questions. This decad is set to Arya meter. Daya is saluted specifically in this verse as the raja mahishi - consort of the king- not a mere king - but She is the empress, who in an instant rushes to the aid of Her suffering children (errant baddha jivans) to provide relief. The word Daya itself denotes compassion. Since this is the case, She cannot bear the sight of her children suffering. Therefore, She instantly springs forth to remove their suffering. How does Daya Devi accomplish this? She spurns all the royal paraphernalia and vehicles befitting her status. Instead, She proceeds on bare foot to see firsthand who amongst her children are suffering. Since she occupies the stature of being the Empress of kalyana gunams, all other kalyana gunams automatically follow her enquiring of her “what can I do?” agresara bodha viracitA lokAm is the salutation that comes next. As She sets out to help her suffering children, there is darkness everywhere. Now, the kalyana gunam of jnanam functions as the lamp that illuminates the path and proceeds ahead of Daya Devi. This reveals to Daya Devi the status of every being in the universe and their suffering. svAdhIna vruShagirIshAm svayam prabhUtAm pramANayAmi dayAm is the salutation that follows.



As Daya Devi sets out to help her suffering children, there is darkness everywhere. Now, the kalyana gunam of jnanam functions as the lamp that illuminates the path and proceeds ahead of Her.

Is She capable of removing the sorrowful plight of these suffering jIvans? No doubt jnanam precedes her and reveals the plight of these jIvans. The other gunams such as balam, aisvaryam, shakti, tejas et al. offer their support to her by way of asking "how can I help?". However, are they not all controlled by Lord Srinivasa? Therefore, it appears that only He has the authority to command them and get them to execute his will. How would it then be possible for Daya Devi to accomplish her mission? Svami Desikan answers this beautifully by noting that the Lord himself functions at the command of Daya Devi. Therefore, all His kalyana gunams are subservient to her. In a household, if the yajamanan is obedient to his wife, no permission from him is required. All executive decisions are made by the BhArya. Daya Devi functions in this manner and therefore, is able to easily remove the sufferings of her children. This aspect is glorified in the Gunaratna kosam of Sri Parashara Bhattar as:

shriyai samastacidacidvidhAnavyasanaM hareH

angIkAribhirAlokaiH sArthayantyai kR^itonjaliH

Salutations to Sri! Emperuman with great effort engages in shrushti. Then He looks at Thayar, who with her approving eye-glances endorses the work of the Lord. It is important to note here that the act of Shrushti is hence a function performed jointly by the Lord and Thayar. Therefore, when the Lord himself is subject to Thayar's command, does She need his permission to rescue her suffering children? Therefore, She is svadhIna in this regard. Svami Desikan performs a formal saranagati to Daya Devi using this as pramanam (pramANayAmi dayAm). Let alone Daya Devi, if one has the recommendation of Svami Desikan, that automatically ensures the torrential flow of Daya Devi. Therefore, it is sufficient if one is a receptacle to the grace of Svami Desikan."

Next we quote from the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "When Daya Devi walks along to enquire about problems of deserving people, she majestically walks as a venerable lady - an independent queen; she is led by a servant, namely bodha (jnAna). She is followed by a retinue of female attendants, such as shakti. Daya Devi wishes to ameliorate the condition of devotees. She chooses to walk so that she can be in close contact with common folk. She is portrayed as a quality of Venkatesa. Nevertheless, She is an independent queen so to say. She indeed keeps the Lord Srinivasa at her influence, at her beck and call! She is under nobody's influence. It is such a personage, whom I trust, surrender unto and hold aloft as an authority to obey.



The Lord himself is subject to Thayar's command!

1. The path showing attendant is male. He is called bodha. The accompanying retinue is led by a female named shakti. We may remember that the Lord is characterized by a set of six qualities, namely, Jnana, Sakthi, Bala, Virya, Aisvarya, and Tejas. The significant metaphorical presentation needs to be observed.
2. Daya is the queen of Bhagavad-gunas! To Svami Desikan, this queen has dominance over the Lord so to say. The Lord will act according to Daya Devi's wish.

I surrender to her, Svami Desikan asserts. The word pramANayAmi has rich import. I swear by Her. She is my sole guide. I will abide by Her. She guides me in every step."



Slokam 12

अपि निखिल लोक सुचरित मुष्टिंधय दुरितमूर्च्छना जुष्टम् ।

संजीवयतु दये मां अञ्जन गिरिनाथ रञ्जनी भवती ॥ १२ ॥

api nikhila loka sucharita muShTindhaya durita mUrchChanA juShTam|
sa~njIvayatu daye mAm a~njana girinAtha ra~njanI bhavatI || 12



The anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin is quoted first



"Svami Desikan salutes Daya Devi again. In the previous verse, he glorified Daya Devi as the foremost kalyana gunam of the Lord and performs a formal surrender to her. In response, Daya Devi seems to question Svami Desikan "Svami, you have performed Saranagati to me. What use is this?" Svami Desikan is quite astounded by this query and responds "It is parama prayojanam – for, I come seeking refuge in you to obtain the grace of Lord Srinivasa, who is subject to Your command." Daya Devi suggests to Svami "How can I possibly intercede on your behalf with the Lord. The sin pile that you have brought is enormous." In common terms, if a child expends a small amount of money from parents' earnings without permission to purchase a chocolate or so, such an offense is easily forgiven. However, if a large sum of money is inappropriately squandered by the child without parental consent, how is it possible for the mother of the child to conceal this from the child's father and appease his

anger? It must be mentioned here that Svami Desikan's conduct is beyond reproach. However, out of his extreme compassion for suffering jivans, he takes on the role of one such and approaches Daya Devi on their behalf. Daya Devi continues her dialog with Svami and asks "Given the enormity of the magnitude of the crimes committed, how can I possibly be expected to intervene on your behalf with Lord Srinivasa and shield you from his wrath?" Svami Desikan accepts this and responds "Indeed Daya Devi, the sins are so great - api nikhila lokasucharita muShTim daya durita mUrchChanAjuShTam - my sins are not trivial. I have sinned in anger, in my calm state, I have sinned knowingly, I have sinned unknowingly. In this manner, I have accumulated numerous sins."

How could one possibly accrue sins when one is calm? For instance, one may decide to sit down. During that act, unknowingly an insect or two may be killed. This is very much a sin. When calm if one partakes of food that is forbidden, that too is a sin. In a like manner numerous sins are accrued. In anger the sins committed are graver. kruddhodhanyA guronapi - in anger one may not hesitate to commit Acharya apacharam. Out of sheer frustration a third category of sins can be accrued. For example, an individual may perform kaimkaryams such as Tirumanjanam and the like to Perumal for a mandalam to obtain success in exams. However, if the exam results go awry, frustration sets in and the resulting anger can cause the individual to commit grave sins due to utterances such has "the Lord has no mercy-kaNNE theriyilE. Another instance where sins can be accrued is laukikas seeking to perform a vaidika karyam await the arrival of the Vaidikas, who may be delayed for good reason. Unable to tolerate the delay the laukika begins berating the Vaidika. This constitutes an apacharam. Cutting a fruit or vegetable on the cutting board can inadvertently sever a hidden insect into two halves. This too is a sin. In a like manner, there are numerous sins that are committed knowingly or unknowingly. These are the vast extent of sins.

Additionally, we may categorize people as good or bad on the basis of the wealth they have accrued or the knowledge they have gained. However, that is not the basis for the categorization. It is the underlying qualities such as Daya or Vatsalyam of the individual that cause this. When seen in this light, a bad person may have good qualities and a good person may have bad qualities. Therefore, everyone is a combination of good and bad traits. Even one, who is derided as a bad person universally, will have an iota of compassion. Then what becomes the basis for declaring someone to be good and another to be bad? It is to be understood that the predominance of good traits causes one to be declared to be good, while a predominance of bad traits causes one to be characterized as bad. For example,

one may be compassionate and inclined to do charity. However, prior to giving away wealth in charity, he abuses the recipient, which causes the recipient to think "Is it worth accepting this gift after such harshness? Therefore, I am better off not taking this at all." Therefore, even though the giver was charitably inclined and had a disposition to give wealth, his anger masked this innate goodness. The anger stands out. Here Svami Desikan instructs us that only the good quality needs to be taken into account and the anger must be ignored. This should be the basis of determination of a good person otherwise. Sri Kuresar notes in his Vaikuntha Sthavam tribute:

yad brahmakalpaniyutAnubhave(a)pyanAshyaM

tat kilbiShaM srujati janturiha kshaNArdhe |

evaM sadA sakalajanmasu sAparAdhaM

kshAmyasyaho! tadabhisandhivirAmamAtrAt

Each one has a unique gift of intelligence. I too have one! What is it? Asks the Lord. Sri Kuresar states all sins that we commit we necessarily have to endure their consequences. For example, Tirumangai Azhwar lists the punishment for one lusting after the wife of another in his Pasuram. The errant individual is consigned to hell, where he is forced to embrace a red-hot metal replica of the lady he had sought. In a similar vein there are specific penalties prescribed for specific sins. Sri Kuresar remarks "However, my sin-pile is enormous, which requires undergoing penalties for several crore years of Brahma (one year of human life=1 day in the life of devas. Several fold such units of deva lives constitute a day in the life of Chaturmukha Brahma). My intelligence lies in getting a mechanism to destroy this enormous sin-pile in an instant through Your grace." It must be noted here that the Lord is no doubt possessing nirhetuka krupa. However, since vaishamya dosham should not accrue, He is looking for an excuse to wipe out this enormous sin pile. If one submits an appeal with folded hands in Anjali mudra "I have no energy left to commit additional sins" the most compassionate Lord is moved by this appeal and in an instant destroys the enormous sin-pile. Therefore, while characterizing someone as good or bad one must critically examine oneself to see the instances where good acts have been performed and where sins have been committed. This is a comparison undertaken by Svami Desikan. Prior to this let us present the anubhavam of Svami Alavandar from verse 23 of Stotra Ratnam:

na ninditaM karma tadasti loke

sahasrasho yanna mayA vyadhAyi |

sohaM vipAkAvasare mukunda

krandAmi saMpratyagatistavAgre||

"Today I stand before you pretending to be a good child. However, I cry out thinking of myself until this moment. I have committed all the forbidden acts-nindita karma-a thousand times I have committed these offenses. Due to yAdruchika puNyam, I have secured your grace and have been able to come before you. Knowing that I have no other refuge, Oh Mukunda! You must heed my appeal and protect me." It must be understood here that neither Svami Alavandar nor Sri Kuresar have committed those grave sins. However, their appeal is submitted on behalf of commonly encountered erring jivans. Svami Desikan while treading the path of the great masters before him, unmistakably leaves behind a mark of uniqueness. In this manner Svami Desikan answers the question of Daya Devi "nikhila loka sucharita muShTim daya durita mUrchChanAjuShTam - My sin pile is such that it can swallow like achamanam water the ocean of good performed by all the worlds, just as Agastya Rishi consumed the ocean waters for achamanam." Punyam and Papam are like credit and debit balance. Say, if one performs a few good deeds but then commits grave offenses, the credit balance is offset and debit balance increases in the manner of adharmaH dharma nAshanaH dharmeNapApamapanudati declares the Upanishad/Vedam. Sins can be destroyed by performance of extremely good deeds. However if the enormity of the sins is so great, it can easily nullify the good arising from Dharma karyas. Amongst sins, one must be careful about Brahmavit apacharams. This apacharam is capable of nullifying the results of all accumulated punya karmas. The Sastras go to great extents to provide injunctions forbidding apacharams towards those who have performed Veda adhyayanam or those who have studied Vedanta scriptures. There was a great Acharya known as Navalpakkam Svami (Nrusimharya Tatacharya Svamin) who lived in Kanchipuram. One of his dearest sishyas, Ayya Devanathacharya Svamin lived in NAvalpakkam itself. If we prostrate before these mahans one could satisfy the craving of prostrating before Svami Desikan's vibhava avataram more than 750 years ago. Their anushtanam was exactly in the same manner of Svami Desikan. They performed daily Bhagavad aradhanam through a life of Uncha Vrutthi. Jnana, Anushtanam and Vairagyam are the salient traits of an Acharya. Their jnAnam, anushtanam, and vairagyam were matchless._During the time of Navalpakkam Svami, who was in Kanchipuram, Ayya Devanathacharya Svamin was rendering kalakshepams in Navalpakkam and thus had sishyas of his own. If some of them went to Kanchipuram to prostrate at the feet of Navalpakkam Svami, he would very kindly enquire "How is your Acharya?" to which the sishyas would reply "adiyen!

tirumEni pAnga endaruLirkkEr (He is keeping well)" At that moment, NAvalpakkam Svami would instruct them "Listen to this carefully. On no account should you incur any apacharam towards your Acharya. He has led such a blemish-free life that even the slightest apacharam towards him would result in a mountainous sin-pile for you. Therefore, be careful" This instruction exemplifies the fact that if one incurs apacharam towards a Brahmavit, it will wipe out all the accumulated punyam in one's life. Now returning to Svami Desikan's reply to Daya Devi of "nikhila loka sucharitam". Svami Desikan states that the sins he has committed are of such magnitude that they can wipe out the entire ocean of punya karma accumulated by all the worlds like a handful of water. "Having sinned thus, I am in an unconscious state." This is akin to a healthy person losing his health on account of blood cancer rendering them in a comatose state. The comatose state is such that one becomes impervious to one's own actions as well as those of others. The comatose state of one who is affected by sins of such magnitude is similar in that they do not know their own svarUpam, nor are they aware of Bhagavan's svarUpam, and are ignorant of the means to reach Bhagavan. This is known as mUrcha dashai. This is my state declares Svami Desikan. Daya Devi addresses Svami and states "You have confessed about your sins, their magnitude and the resulting impact on you in mUrcha dashai. How can I possibly argue on your behalf with Lord Srinivasa?" Here is where we must appreciate the answer of Svami Desikan through the beautiful usage of "api", namely despite my sins being of such enormity, You can redeem me oh Daya Devi! This is because You are my Mother - let alone me, you are the Mother of the entire Universe! When the child is in a murchai state can a mother sit by idly watching? Will the mother say let him suffer the consequences of his sins? Or will she start looking for remedies in terms of which doctor should I take the child for treatment? May be if I take the child to a hospital the child can be revived from this state, would be the thought process of the mother. Therefore, you need to get me the divine medicine by taking me to the right doctor "sanjIvayatu" or "sanjIvayati" are two prayogams employed in this context. The former is a request for protection, while the latter is a declaration that Daya Devi unfailingly protects one in this comatose state. Daya Devi relents and asks Svami "How should I help?" Svami Desikan beautifully answers this as "please get me the appropriate medicine for this comatose state just as an ailing person is relieved from his ill with the administration of medicine" Daya Devi asks "Where is this medicine?" Svami Desikan answers "It is nearby right here at the Tiruvenkatam Hill" Daya Devi asks "What is the medicine?" Svami Desikan skillfully refers to the salutation "aushadam jagataH setuH (One who is the medicine for the entire universe) and vaidhyo

nArAyaNo hariH (He is the medicine as well as the doctor for all ailments.)" Setu snanam is considered to be the panacea, while Lord Narayana is the doctor. In this instance, Setu is also a glorification of the Lord. This emphasizes the point that the Lord is the means as well as the end. Svami Desikan states here to Daya Devi "Please get us this medicine known as Srinivasa, who is the means as well as the end and rid us of this mrutha praya state." It is instructive to recall the Ramayana episode where Indrajit employs the Brahmastram, which renders Rama, Lakshmana, and the entire vanara army unconscious. Vibhishana arrives at that moment and enquires from a weak Jambavan as to what happened. Jambavan instructs Vibhishana to see if Hanuman is well. "tasmin jIvati vIretu" is the salutation from Valmiki Ramayanam quoted here. The instruction to Vibhishana is that "do not worry about how many members of our army are dead and how many are alive? If Hanuman is alive all of us can survive" The related Ramayanam salutation is "Hanumat kinchita prANe hatamapi Ahatam balam". If Hanuman is alive, even though we may be close to being dead, we have the strength of one that is alive. If Hanuman is dead, even though we may be alive we are as good as dead instructs Jambavan. This aptly mirrors the state of an errant jIvan-mUrcha dashai. Here it may be noted that merely employing jIvayatu would be sufficient to stay alive. Why does Svami Desikan employ the tribute sanjIvayatu? The former is like putting a patient in a comatose state on life support through a ventilator, whereas the latter is a complete revival restoring the patient to the original healthy state. Daya Devi responds to Svami's request. "You ask me to perform this gargantuan task. Is it possible for me to do this?" Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute "anjanagirinAtharanjanI bhavathi - here anjana is like an eye ointment. The Lord himself, who is the doctor derives pleasure from You Oh Daya Devi! There is nothing that He cannot cure. He is completely under your command.





The Lord derives pleasure from SrI Daya Devi and is completely under Her command!

It is common to recite the prayer sharIrE jarjharIbhUte vyAdhi graste kaLebare auShadaM jAhnavi toyaM vaIdyo nArAyaNo hariH - It is no ordinary medicine. It is the water from the Ganga River. The doctor treating this illness is none other than Lord Narayana. In this instance, the doctor, Lord Srinivasa derives delight from Daya Devi. He is completely subject to Her command. Therefore, there is no medicine that You cannot get. The prescribing doctor is entirely under Your command. Therefore, this task is not impossible for You. Therefore, please take pity on my

helpless state and make efforts to redeem me. In the second verse of Sri Bhashyam, Svami Bhashyakarar declares: pArAshAarya vAchassudhAM upanishat dugdhAbdhi madyoddhrtAM samsArAgni vidIpana vyapagata prANAtma sanjIvinIm - EmperumAnAr's Srisuktis are capable of reviving one from the throes of death. In a like manner, Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis too provide the same benefit. He has specifically submitted the appeal on our behalf to Daya Devi clearly outlining our state. The inner meaning is that once the individual has decided to perform Saranagati to Lord Srinivasa, Daya Devi will undoubtedly ensure that the compassionate eye-glances of the Lord will fall upon the individual bestowing untold benefits. Daya Devi looks on in astonishment at Svami Desikan upon hearing this tribute. Daya Devi is thinking to herself-is it even possible to perform this demanding task that Svami has submitted to me? Svami Desikan in a trice discerns this intent of Daya Devi and presents his reply in the next verse."

Next we present the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "The sum total of punya of all people in the universe - (imagine how mammot*h its size would be)* would be devoured, in a gulp by what I would designate as my total sin, as the ocean was gulped in a handful by Agastya. I am such a heinous sinner, prolific, almost in a state of stupor as if by the toxicity of my sinful acts. Who can help me? Where is the herbal relief that Hanuman brought to revive Rama and Lakshmana after they were bound by the BrahmAstra? Yes Oh Daya Devi! You are indeed the agent that revives. You are adored by the Lord of Anjanagiri. Please help me recover; rejuvenate me; You are the sanjIvi to me."

1. We have potential to commit great sins. We fall down unconscious. We have a hope in the Lord's Daya if we appeal to her and move her in our favor.
2. The words employed by Svami Desikan are reminiscent of Ramayana verses and the invocatory verses of Sri Bhashyam."



Slokam 13

भगवति दये भवत्या वृषगिरि नाथे समाप्लुते तुङ्गे ।

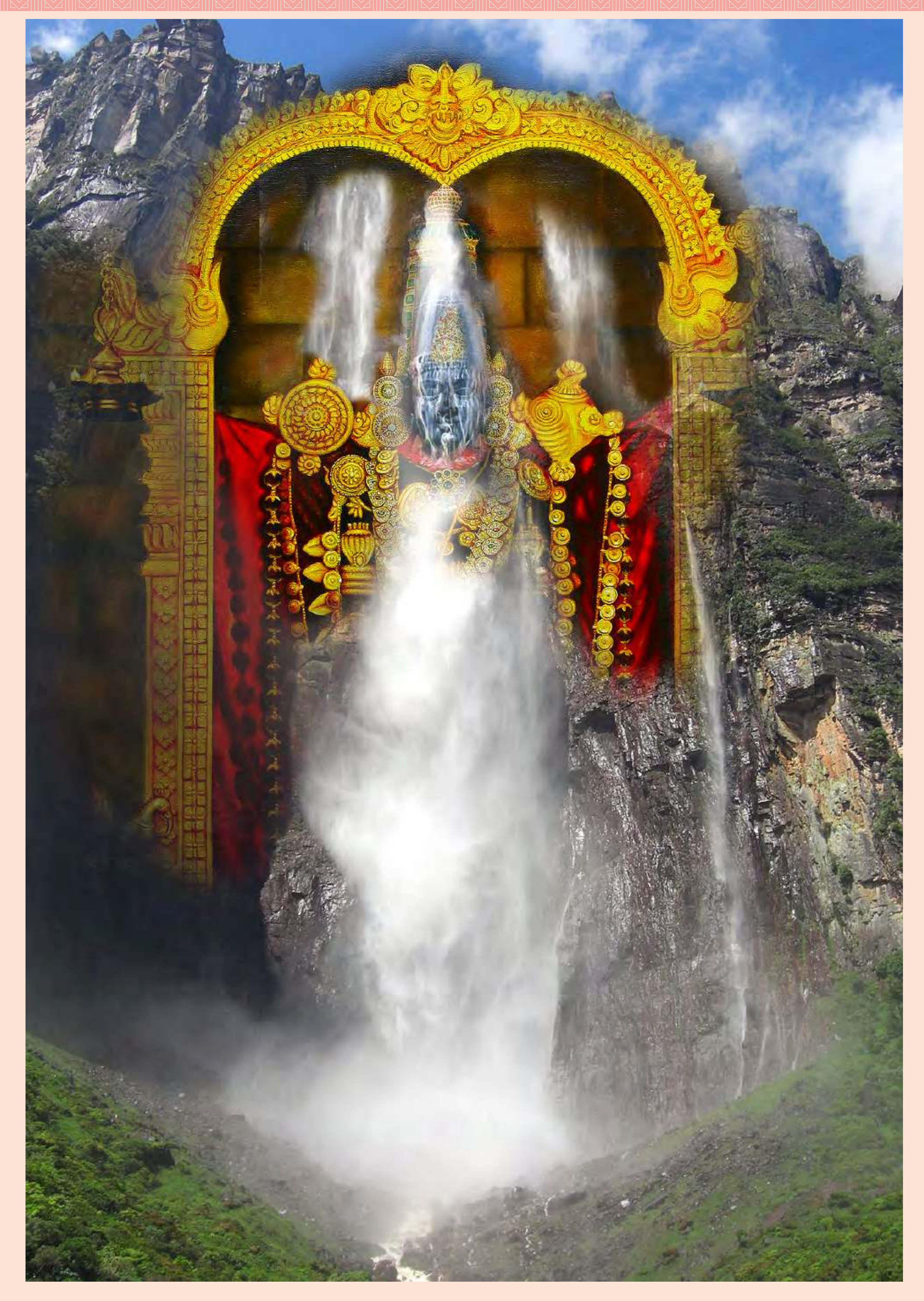
अप्रतिघ मज्जनानां हस्तालम्बो मदागसां मृग्यः ॥ १३ ॥

bhagavati daye bhavatyA vR^iShagiri nAthe samAplute tu~Nge|

apratigha majjanAnAM hastAlambo madAgasAM mR^igyaH||13



We quote first the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "At the conclusion of the previous verse, Daya Devi for a moment is astonished by the imploring appeal of Svami Desikan and even thinks if it is possible for her to accomplish this gargantuan task requested of her. Svami Desikan, who discerns this in a masterly fashion, responds in this verse that nothing is impossible for Daya Devi. She can easily fulfill this request. All of us seek aniShTa nivrutti and iShTa prApti, while offering our prayers. aniShTa nivrutti comes first and then iShTa prApti follows. For example, one may be suffering from illness. In addition, they may have desires for getting wealth, constructing a home and the like. However, when they submit a prayer, the first instinct is to ask for relief from illness. The other desires follow later. In this instance relief from illness is the aniShTa nivrutti, while fulfillment of the other desires denotes iShTa prApti. In the context of Svami Desikan's appeal to Daya Devi he is in lock step with this process in that he first seeks aniShTa nivrutti in the form of destruction of his sins and then subsequently seeks the grace of Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa for Nitya kaimkaryam. The issue at hand is Daya Devi's rhetorical question of whether she is capable of providing aniShTa nivrutti. Svami Desikan emphatically answers this through the statement "Oh Daya Devi you alone are capable of granting aniShTa nivrutti and none else", as reflected in the tribute bhagavati daye. Lord Srinivasa is addressed as Bhagavan. In this context, Svami Desikan employs a usage referring to Bhagavan to address Daya Devi. Oh Daya Devi-you who are equal to the Lord in all respects-your flow is no ordinary flow. It is a tsunami that sweeps away everything in its wake. This includes the hill of Tiruvenkatam as well as the. Lord Srinivasa standing on top of the Tiruvenkatam hill. What else is required? Your torrential Daya flow is able to have Lord Srinivasa immersed and bound by you. Therefore, is it impossible for you to rescue me? Let there be no doubt that you can easily do this.



The torrential Daya flow is able to have Lord Srinivasa immersed and bound by SrI Daya Devi.

PeriyAzhvar enjoys the vaibhavam of Lord Srinivasa in the Senniyongu pasurams. These set of 10 verses are rendered during Brahmotsavam. The relevant verse is

emmanA! en kula daivamE!

ennuDai nAyakanE!

nin uLEnAy peRRa nanmai

ivvulakinil Ar peruvAr?

namman pOlE vIzhttamukkum

nATTil uLLa pAvam ellAm

summenAdE kaiviTTODi

tUrukaL pAyndanavE.

There are 3 viseshams in the manner of addressing the Lord-emmanA! en kula daivamE! ennuDai nAyakanE! Normally a single distinguishing trait is sufficient for praise. However, here the Azhvar uses 3 viseshams.

1) emmanA - denotes one who is like my Mother in the manner of exhibiting unconditional love and compassion! He who is the emperor that corrects errant subjects in the manner of *rAjA shAstA durAtmanA.*
2) en kula daivam - it must be remembered in the context of the TirupallANDu salutation *ezhAtkAlum pazhippinOm* nAknal - we from numerous births belong to your feet - *kuDikuDiyATceykinROm* is other TirupallaNDu declaration of importance here to denote that forthcoming generations in his line belong to the feet of Lord Srinivasa in the manner of the declaration *Sri Srinivasa kuladaivatam na:* - Srinivasa eternally associated with Sri is our family deity.
3) ennuDai nAyakanE - you are the one that protects us. You are the one that knows what is good for us. The responsibility of protecting us lies entirely with You Oh Srinivasa! Whatever you do is in our best interests.

The key messages from these three tributes are as follows:

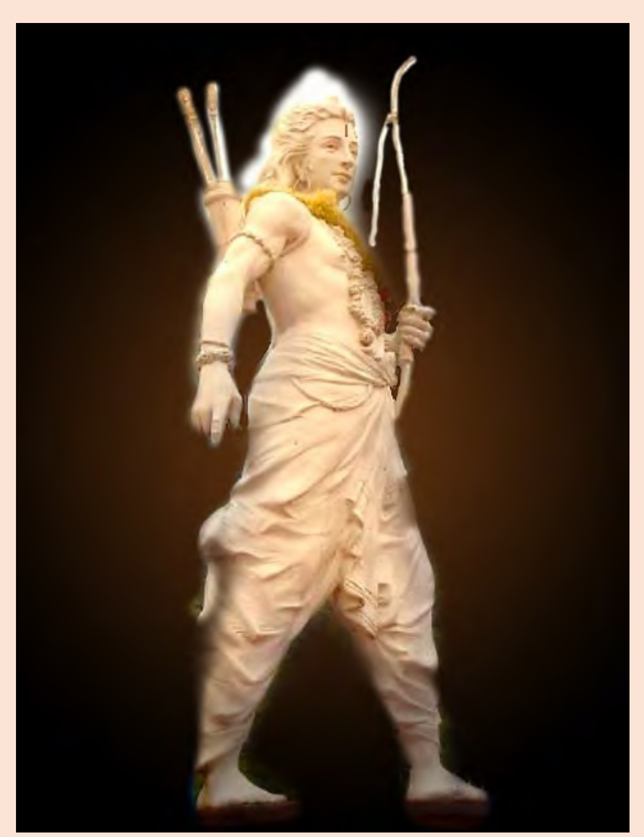
1) emmanA - This denotes the deha-Atma bhAvam
2) en kula daivam - This denotes that we are the sole property of Lord Srinivasa
3) ennuDai nAyakanE - We have no svAtantryam - independence and are entirely reliant upon the Lord for protection.

The Azhvar declares "I have received a great bhagyam!" This is reflected in the tribute nin uLEnAy peRRa nanmai ivvulaginil Ar peruvAr namman pOlE, namely "You maintain a list of people that belong to you. In this process You have included me in this list. This is my biggest bhagyam. Can there be a greater blessing than this? Who else in this universe is the recipient of such a great blessing?" In reply to this the Lord enquires "How is that your name appears in this list? You have sinned greatly." The Azhvar replies "My master! The moment, I became the recipient of Your grace all my sins were destroyed like mere trifles in the manner of rats seeking hiding places when confronted by a cat." This is reflected in the tribute vIzhttamukkum nATTil uLLa pAvam ellAm summenAdE kaiviTTODi tUrukaL pAyndanavE. Now so much for the description of the Lord's glory. Returning to Daya Devi, she possesses the skill and strength to submerge the Lord. Therefore, is there anything impossible for You? Absolutely not declares Svami Desikan in the tribute vR^iShagirinAthe samAplutE tunge. In verse 58 of Stotraratnam Svami Alavandar exclaims:

"dayAsindho bandho niravadhikavAtsalyajaladhe

tavasmAram smAram guNagaNamitIcChAmi gatabhIH"

Despite the numerous sins I have committed the moment I seek refuge in the Lord's feet all fears are destroyed. How so? The Lord is an ocean of mercy. You are the father, mother, and companion for all beings in the universe. niravadhika vAtsalya jaladhe - Your compassion for these beings like a mother is such that it is immeasurable. You serve as the ocean of such compassion- tavasmAram smAram guNagaNamitIcChAmi gatabhIH - contemplating on your numerous gunams rids me of the mountain-like sin pile that I have accumulated from beginning-less time. Svami Desikan in his elaboration of this slokam declares that the Lord has the capacity to destroy in a trice the sins of those engaged in enjoyment of his kalyana gunams. Such is the prowess of Lord Srinivasa. However, since he is completely under your control, what to speak of performing Saranagati to You, oh Daya Devi? Is there anything at all that is impossible? Therefore even though my sin-pile is sufficient to render me in mUrcha dashai, you are effortlessly able to destroy this (api nikhila lokasucharita muShTim daya durita mUrchChanAjuShTam tribute from the previous verse needs to be remembered again in this context.). apratigha majjanAnAM madAgasAM mR^igyaH hastAlambo - the tsunami known as Srinivasa Daya sweeps away everything in its wake including my enormous sin-pile. It is important to note the anubhavam of Svami Desikan through the usage hastAlambo - namely the sin-pile looks for something that provides a helping hand to cling on.



However, so ruthless is the Daya-flow that there is absolutely no support to cling to for the sin-pile. No matter where the sin-pile turns, it only encounters Daya Devi! Svami Desikan's anubhavam here is inspired by the Ramayanam instance where upon the death of Indrajit, Ravana overcome by sorrow, unleashed his fiercest horde of demons to employ maya warfare and inflict great casualty on the Vanara army. The Vanaras appealed to Rama for help and in response Lord Rama went to work with his bow from which an unending stream of arrows emerged. This shattered the Maya tactics of the rakshasas and provided instant relief to the Vanaras. Maharishi Valmiki describes the scenario of the unending flow of arrows from Lord Rama's bow giving the appearance of beholding Rama no matter where one turned in the battlefield. In a like manner, Svami Desikan uses the analogy for Daya Devi in the context of ruthlessly destroying the sin-pile of the errant jIvans.

The inner meaning is that Lord Srinivasa is the adjudicator for the results of punyam and papam. However, since he is swept away by the tsunami of Daya Devi, there is no one to adjudicate the results of punyam and papam! Therefore, there is no stopping of Daya Devi. Thus, if Daya Devi's grace is secured nothing more is necessary. In response Daya Devi counters "Oh Svami you glorify me as Daya, which is after all a quality. This is present nearly universally in everyone - even the worst of beings have a sliver of compassion in their hearts. That being the case even devatAntaras have Daya. Why do you come to me (Srinivasa Daya) ignoring all of them? What is so special about Srinivasa Daya?" Svami Desikan provides a masterly answer to this query in the next verse through the salutation:

kR^ipaNajanakalpalatikAm kR^itAparadhasya niShkriyAmAdhyAM
vR^iShagirinAtha daye tvAm vidhanti samsAratAriNIm vibudhAH

The sambhodhanam here is vR^iShagirinAtha daye - not anyone's daya but specifically Srinivasa Daya is greater than the Daya of all other Divya Desa

PerumAls. Previously it was seen that the purpose of offering prayers to EmperumAn is for aniShTa nivrutti (destruction of sins) and iShTa prApti (fulfillment of desires). It was established that Daya Devi is capable of aniShTa nivrutti. Now Svami Desikan turns to iShTa prApti. Who is capable of fulfilling his desire? For this purpose it must be borne in mind that his desire as a paramAikantin is that of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple - recall the tribute apavarga trivargayoH prasUtim from a prior verse for Daya Devi. Therefore, You alone Daya Devi are capable of fulfilling my desire. Hence, do not think you can get away from my appeal so easily. We need to bear in mind that the phalans conferred by the daya of devatAntaras is alpam (trivial) and asthiram (transient). Moreover, the phalan they grant is also limited and specific. For example, arogyam bhAskarAt icChet ShriyamicChed hutAsanAt - Surya grants health, while Agni grants wealth. In a like manner if one seeks jnanam it is recommended to worship Siva. Moksham is granted by Janardhana. Daya Devi having Srinivasa under her control is able to grant Moksham. Let us set this aside for a moment. Surya can confer health alone but not wealth or jnanam. Similarly, Agni can confer wealth but not health or jnanam. Similarly, Siva can grant jnanam only but not health or wealth or for that matter moksham. However, Perumal is able to confer Moksham as well as all the rest! There is nothing that is beyond Him. Therefore, these other deities can only confer ekalka phalan, whereas Perumal is capable of granting sarva phalan. Since the capacity of these other deities is limited and specific, I need to approach each one of them for that specific phalan. However, Perumal grants everything in the manner of a one-stop shopping convenience. Therefore, I submit to You Oh Daya Devi, the appeal for my desire! There are many more reasons for not going to other devatas, which shall be elaborated upon in the next verse. In conclusion, aniShTa nivrutti and iShTa prApti are both attained as a result of surrender to the Feet of Daya Devi!"

We now present the summary of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin's anubhavam. "Oh Goddess Daya Devi! You are a veritable flood of torrential force and devastation - so visualized figuratively- in which the tallest, topmost personage, Lord Srinivasa, too will be totally immersed! What to speak of my sins? Without a murmur or grumbling, they will all be lost in the flood! They cannot at all catch at a straw or hold, so as to survive and escape! They will be sunk without any resistance.

Indeed, the anger - a hot feeling - provoked by my sins, even in the Lord would be effaced in the deluge-flood.

A prop or hold to which a sin can cling and survive has only to be searched; it would not be available!

1. The whole presentation is poetic. The important theme is that the flood of Daya can drown all sins of mine. My hope for survival as a sentient lies in the Lord's Daya quality.
2. The pure literary implication is that one's sins can be simply dissolved and decimated in the Lord's Daya quality.
3. As a praise poem, this is relevant and interesting. As an ethical thesis it cannot be sustained due to the implication "Do whatever you like. No qualities of right and wrong would be needed. There is Daya quality that will eat away all, as a deluge flood would carry away all materials small or big." On the surface of it, the verse can surely sustain a construction of such concepts. However, to get a clearer picture, this will be addressed in more detail in verse 20.
4. A warning here will not be out of place. The thrust of this verse is the vastness of Srinivasa-Daya. It will immerse all sins; why doubt this when it immerses Lord Srinivasa himself. An intelligent sentient can become complacent under the guise of "I can commit and accumulate sins; Daya Devi will obliterate all of them. When it is a question of complete immersion, and, thereby, elimination, where is the difference between an atomic material and the Meru Mountain (see Svami Alavandar's tribute in verse 8 of Stotraratnam).

All our essays on philosophy get dissolved in the thesis. Why? When will such a Daya flood be a real occurrence? To whom will the Daya flow as a torrent? Why should Daya flow for Guha, Sugriva, Vibhishana, and Ravana alike? Would it be rational to assume such a uniform flood? Answers to some of these questions will be found in the elaboration of verse 65.



Slokam 14

कृपण जन कल्प लतिकां कृतापराधस्य निष्क्रियामाद्याम्।

वृषगिरि नाथ दये त्वां विदन्ति संसाररतारिणी विबुधाः॥ १४॥

kR^ipaNa jana kalpa latikAM kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyAm AdhyAm |

vR^iShagiri nAtha daye tvAM vidanti saMsAra tAriNIM vibudhAH || 14



We first present the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "Svami Desikan commences this verse with the tribute vR^iShagirinAtha daye. This is in response to Daya Devi's question "Everyone has an element of compassion (Daya) inherently. That being the case, what is so special about Srinivasa Daya?" Svami Desikan answers this quite eloquently as "Oh Daya Devi! What you say is absolutely true. Other deities like Brahma, Rudra, and Indra too have compassion. However, the fruits that they can grant are trivial and transient. Whereas the fruits that you grant oh Daya Devi are aparimitham! They cannot be measured! Therefore, I salute You! There is an important difference between Lord Srinivasa and other devathas. The vedam declares:

"vasmevavikrINAvahaishamUrjagamshatakratau dehimedadhAmite time tate niharavinnimeharAninihAran niharAmite"

All devatas have a contract, which makes everything transactional. In other words, each devata declares "if you give me something I shall give you something in return." Specifically, offerings of havirbhAgam in yajnams for various devatas are accepted and in return they confer benefits upon the performer of the yajnam. Therefore, they expect something from us before conferring something in return. Hence, Svami Desikan asks, what is the point in submitting to the daya of these devatas? Consequently, he commences his tribute of vR^iShagirinAtha daye. Next when examined from the standpoint of forgiveness, any errors on the part of the seeker are not forgiven easily by other devatas. In fact, they believe in meting out punishment for errors committed by the seeker. Therefore, they do not possess the quality of forgiveness and protecting the seeker. Thus, it is pointless in seeking their protection. Therefore, their Daya is not of use to Svami Desikan and his adiyars. The fourth point against seeking the Daya of other devatas is due to the fact that these devatas are incapable of protecting themselves. When they face

troubles, they seek refuge in Perumal to obtain a panacea for their difficulties. How then can they offer protection to others? Hence Srinivasa Daya which protects all is superior. This is affirmed by Svami NammAzhvar in the pasuram:

pEsa ninRa sivanukkum piraman thanakkum

piRaikkum nAyakan avanE

kapAlanan mOkkatthuk

kaNDu koNmiN

thEsa mAmathiL sUzhnthazhakAya

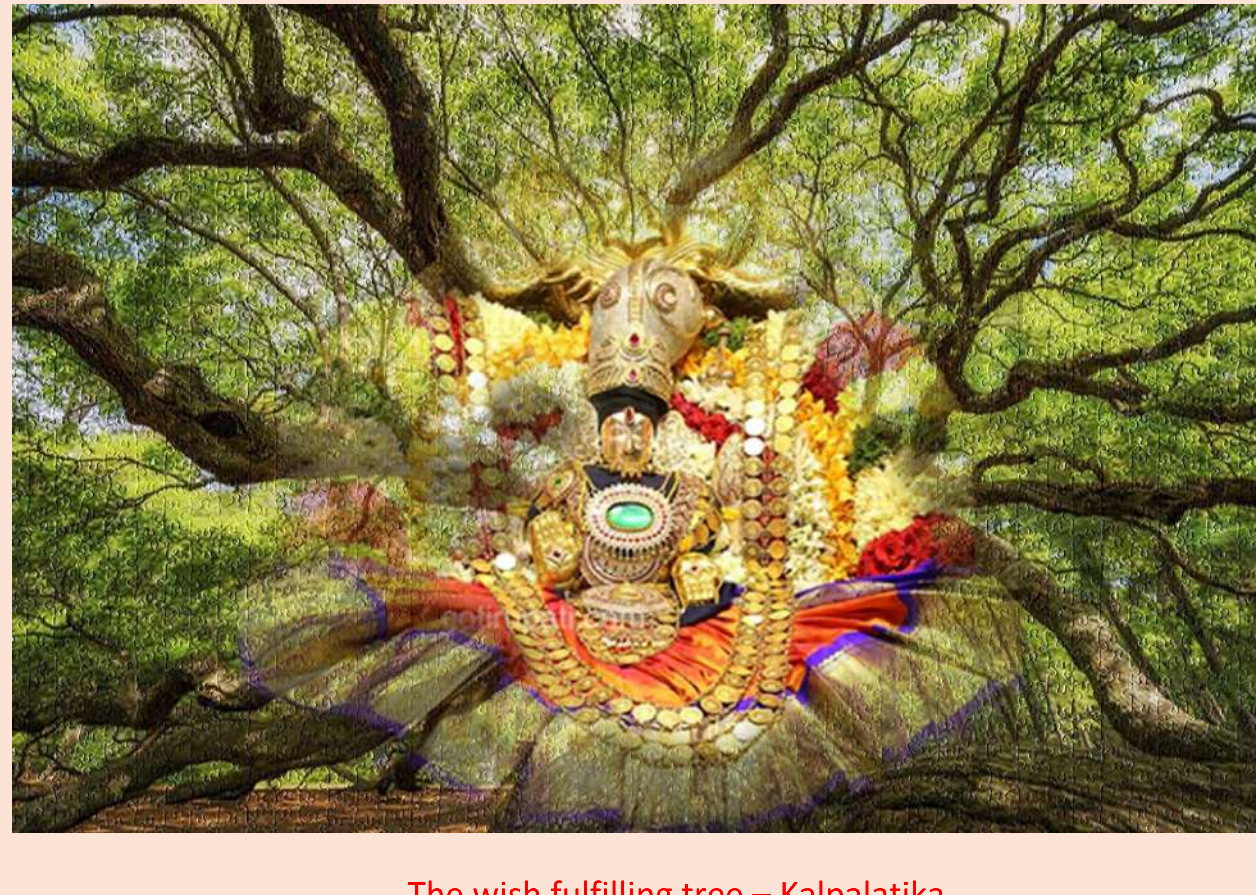
thirukkurukUr athanuL

Ican pAl Or avam paRaithal

ennAvathilingiyarkkE||

Can anyone find fault with EmperumAn? He is the Chief of Devas like Brahma, Rudra, and others. He is their master and controller. He protects them all. This is what needs to be known. He was the one who graced Sivan with the kapala mukthi. Knowing this fact, Svami Desikan asserts that the only one fit to be saluted is Srinivasa Daya. In the AmalanAthipirAn prabandham, ThiruppAnAzhwar declares thuNDavenpirayan thuyar thIrtthavan anjiraiya vaNDuvAzh pozhil suzh aranga nagar meyyavappan. Sivan, who could not rid himself of sin was graced by Lord Narayana to get rid of his sin. Therefore, Svami Desikan resolves, why approach for protection those who are incapable of protecting themselves? Hence, he glorifies vR^iShagirinAtha daye. Next the usage of tvAm is examined. In this context, it needs to be understood as "you" or better yet "You alone". What is it that Daya Devi confers? Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute kR^ipaNa jana kalpa latikAM kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyAm AdhyAm | vR^iShagiri nAtha daye tvAM vidanti saMsAra tAriNIM vibudhAH ||

There are 3 important tasks performed by Daya Devi. First, kR^ipaNajana kalpalatikAm, next kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyA and finally, samsAra tAriNI. These are the visheShaNams alluded to tvAm (Daya Devi) in this verse. These are examined further. Svami Desikan here alludes to the state of ordinary beings, which is in the form of kR^ipaNajana - one that is incapable of doing anything, utterly helpless - deeply mired in the torrential waters of samsara sagara struggling to reach the other bank being tossed hither and tither looking for a supporting hand using which one can emerge from these waters. Under these circumstances, Daya Devi verily serves as the branch of the Karpaka tree.



The wish fulfilling tree – Kalpalatika

Kalpalatikai is capable of fulfilling all wishes. She is quite anxious to rescue these suffering jivans struggling in the samsaric waters. Next the udAra nature of Daya Devi is examined. vaLLal is the term used to describe her generous nature. Svami Desikan uses a salutation in Yadhava Abhyudhayam - apunaH prArthanIyasya prArthitAdhika dhAyinaH arthinaH prathame tasya caramAn paryapUrayan. This salutation describes the qualities of the Maharaja Yadu, who belonged to Yaduvamsam. If somebody asked something of him he would ensure that the seeker never again encountered the need to ask again. Not only that, one who is the first beneficiary of his generosity would have so much in their possession that they can offer subsequent seekers anything they need by saying "You need not go to Yadu Maharaja. I can take care of your need". In this instance Daya Devi is the wish-fulfilling tree, that grants everything and more that is sought from her. The kalpalatikai grants all wishes but does not destroy one's sins. If these sins are not destroyed, the consequences have to necessarily be endured according the Vedam declaration "nA bhuktam **kshiyate karma** kalpa-koTi-shaitairapi" What then can be done is a natural question that arises? In this instance, Daya Devi destroys these sins as a mere trifle as reflected in the kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyAm AdhyAm. The

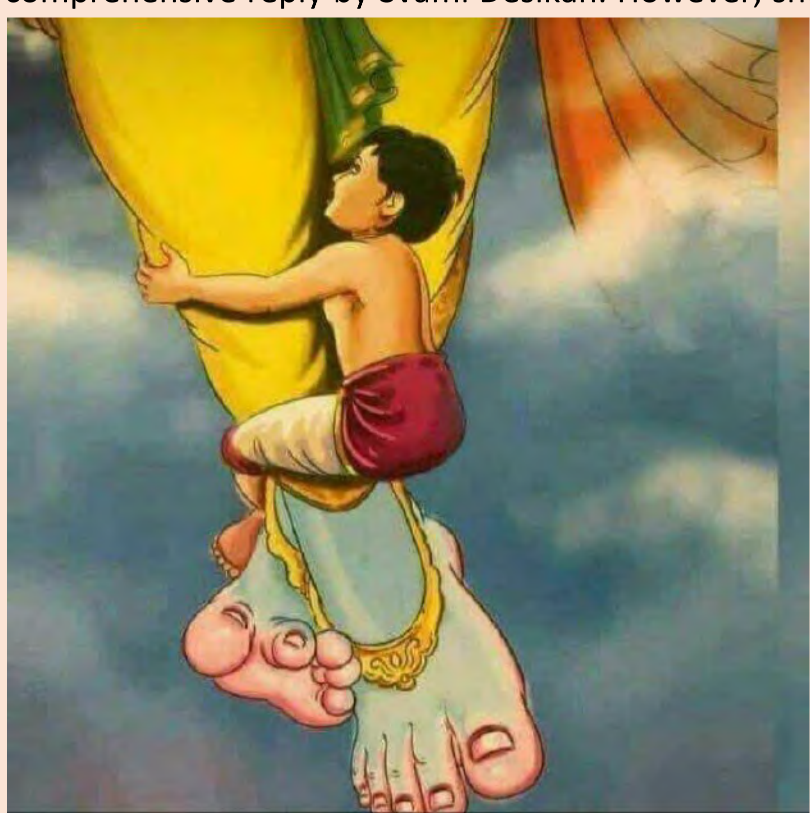
errant baddha jivans have committed numerous offenses, on account of manas (mind), vAk (speech), and kAya (body). Therefore, as far as Emperuman is concerned these folks have incurred apacAram. How then to rid them of these sins? It is through niShkriyai, namely the dharma kAryam by means of which the sins are wiped out. Upanishad waxes eloquent in this regard through the mantram dharmovishvasya jagataH pratiShThA loke dharmIShTha prajA upasarpanti dharmeNa pApamapanudati. The first part of this mantram deals with the fact that it is Dharma that sustains this world. The next part glorifies those engaged in the performance of Dharma Karyams - they are ones that are sought after. The final part of this mantram states that performance of Dharma kAryas destroys sins. Therefore, to destroy the sins in keeping with this declaration Dharma Karyams needs to be undertaken. What are these? These are dAnam (giving away in charity), tirtha snAnam (bathing in holy waters at sacred places), homam, japam, upavAsam. The sastrams prescribe elaborate kramams for undertaking these acts such as kritram, cAndrAyanam, which require fasting (upavAsam) and prAjapatyam. If one is unable to conform to the required austerities, large sums of money need to be gifted to compensate for the inability to follow the demands of rigor. Some others demand fasting for days on end, while some others allow only for the consumption of milk for the duration of the performance of the Dharma karyam. Only when such rigor is followed can the sins be wiped out. This is the sastraic prescription of niShkriyai, which nullifies the pApam. Here Daya Devi functions as the epitome of niShkriyai and rids the baddha jivan of their sins. In the Abheeti sthavam Svami Desikan glorifies this through the salutation “yadikvacana niShkR^itir bhavati sApi doShAvilA” - There is no Dharma kAryam by means of which our sins can be wiped out. When undertaking such a Dharma Karyam lapses arise for which prayaschittham is necessary. This leads to further lapses for which further prayaschittham becomes necessary, leading to an endless cycle. Here is where Daya Devi comes to the rescue by ensuring successful completion of the niShkriyai. For those who are incapable of performing the niShkriyai, as long as they cling to the feet of Daya Devi, She ensures a destruction of their sins by serving as the niShkriyai on their behalf- kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyAm AdhyAm. There is another important point to be noted in the context of kR^itAparAdhasya. This is inspired by the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation “kR^ita aparAdhasya hi te na anyat pashyAmi aham kShamam|antareNa anjalim baddhvA lakShmaNasya prasAdanAt” Upon the killing of Vali and installing Sugriva on the throne, Lord Rama along with Lakshmana resided in the Malyavan mountains for the duration of the rainy season fully expecting Sugriva to help with the search for Sri Sitadevi. However, even after the

rains ceased, Sugriva showed no signs of helping Lord Rama. Beholding the Lord's anguish, Lakshmana quite angrily declared that he would go to Kishkinda and remind Sugriva of his promise to help in the search for Sitadevi. Seeing the enraged Lakshmana caused Sugriva to tremble with fear at a loss for words. At this juncture, Hanuman advised Sugriva how to behave through this slokam. The meaning is that "You have erred. In this state there is no other way to save yourself. Fold your hands in Anjali mudra raised over your head and seek forgiveness from Lakshmana. I do not know of any other way", declared Hanuman. Here it must be noted that Sugriva incurred Bhagavad apacharam by not coming to help Lord Rama in a timely manner. However, forgiveness for this apacharam is being requested from Sri Lakshmana. How could this be appropriate? Here is where it must be noted that if one incurs Bhagavad apacharam, forgiveness can always be sought from a devout BhAgavata. Forgiveness from Bhagavan will be assured. This is the sukshma artham embedded in Hanuman's advice. In an analogous manner Daya Devi is ready to wipe out all the sins that one has committed. As akinchanas (one who is incapable to doing anything including niShkriyaI on one's own) surrendering to her Lotus feet assures us of the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa. Next the focus is on samsAratAriNIm. The step-by-step progression arising from Svami Desikan's careful choice of words must be noted here. First Svami Desikan alludes to Daya Devi as kR^ipaNajana kalpa latikAm. Next he points her role as kR^itAparAdhasya niShkriyAm. Finally, he arrives at the reference to samsara tAriNim.



samsAra tAriNIM – SrI Padmavati Thayar Theppotsavam, Thiruchanur

Here, it must be remembered all blessings for earthly existence are conferred by Daya Devi. However, these are trivial and transient. On the other hand, the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple is the ultimate boon and is permanent. This too can be attained only by the grace of Daya Devi. Daya Devi confers this realization on the suffering jivan through her grace. Next, obtaining this ultimate boon is not easy due the fact that many obstacles have to be overcome in the process - mainly destruction of the sin-pile accumulated over several eons. Only when the sin-pile is destroyed does it become possible to obtain this ultimate boon of Nithya kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple. Daya Devi functions as the destroyer of this sin-pile as evidenced by the salutation AdhyA niShkriya. She enables the crossing of SamsAra. Thayar is saluted as vimukti phaladhAyini - one who grants the boon of moksham. Here it must be understood that Srinivasa Daya in the form of Mahalakshmi Thayar destroys one's sins and grants the bliss of moksham. Therefore, Srinivasa Daya alone becomes worthy of worship and not the Daya of any other deity. This is Svami Desikan's conclusive answer to the rhetorical question raised by Daya Devi in the previous verse. Daya Devi is delighted with this comprehensive reply by Svami Desikan. However, she persists further (in order to bring out Svami Desikan's genius in his singular worship of Daya Devi) and enquires "The Lord has innumerable auspicious qualities as espoused by your Acharyan Svami Bhasyakarar through the salutation asankheya kalyANa mahodadhi. Can you not get the boon you are seeking by glorifying any of these auspicious qualities? What is it that makes Srinivasa Daya stand out? Bhagavan himself begets the name due to the fact that he is replete with 6 guNams of jnAna, bala, aIshvarya, shakti, tejas and vAtsalya. When this is the case why not glorify any of them? Why do you resort to exclusive praise of Srinivasa



Daya? Should you not pause to think about this?" Svami Desikan answers this beautifully in the next verse.

The anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin is quoted next "Oh Daya Devi! There is one, who is indigent, miserable, melancholy person. Like me lacking in intellect, material wealth or physical stamina; how can you expect him to embark on the elaborate ritual of prayaschitta?

You offer solace to him. You tell him not to bother about a ritual of expiation. You stand in its stead. If the indigent person surrenders unto you, you save him, save him from the strain of rituals, save him from samsara and grant him the Lord's eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntha. This is the crux of the judgement of learned seers.

It is simplistic to conclude from verse 13 that one's sins are automatically washed off in the Daya flood. Why so? Because there is a pre-condition to enable the Daya flow. An aspirant, an ambitious one, can imagine in his high haughtiness, that Daya flood has flowed on him to immerse. Not so. Daya Devi can come to help only when the applicant deserves. Even if he is poor, beggarly, but pious, he can resort to prapatti. That mode does not have an exacting demand. When a Prapanna humbly pleads for the Daya flood, there is no hitch. Therefore, the previous verse acquires additional meaning and appropriateness in the context of this verse.

1. This verse expounds on the fact that Daya Devi stands in place of the elaborate expiatory rites. She stands like a tender kalpaka creeper. She grants to the prapanna all that he seeks. She confers moksham too.
2. This is the considered position of venerable seers.
3. Verses 13 and 14 may superficially appear to treat sastraic prescriptions in the context of Prapatti. However, these are loaded with extensive layers of inner meanings, which cannot be adequately captured in English. One needs to read the source commentary in Sanskrit to derive multiple layers of hidden meanings through the anvaya kramam and extensive analysis. A brief synopsis of these points can be found in the summary of verse 20.



Slokam 15

वृषगिरि गृहमेधि गुणाः बोध बलैश्वर्य वीर्य शक्ति मुखाः।

दोषा भवेयुरेते यदि नाम दये त्वया विनाभूताः ॥ १५॥

vR^iShagiri gR^ihamedhi guNAH bodha balaishvarya vIrya shakti mukhAH|

doShA bhaveyurete yadi nAma daye tvayA vinAbhUtAH||15

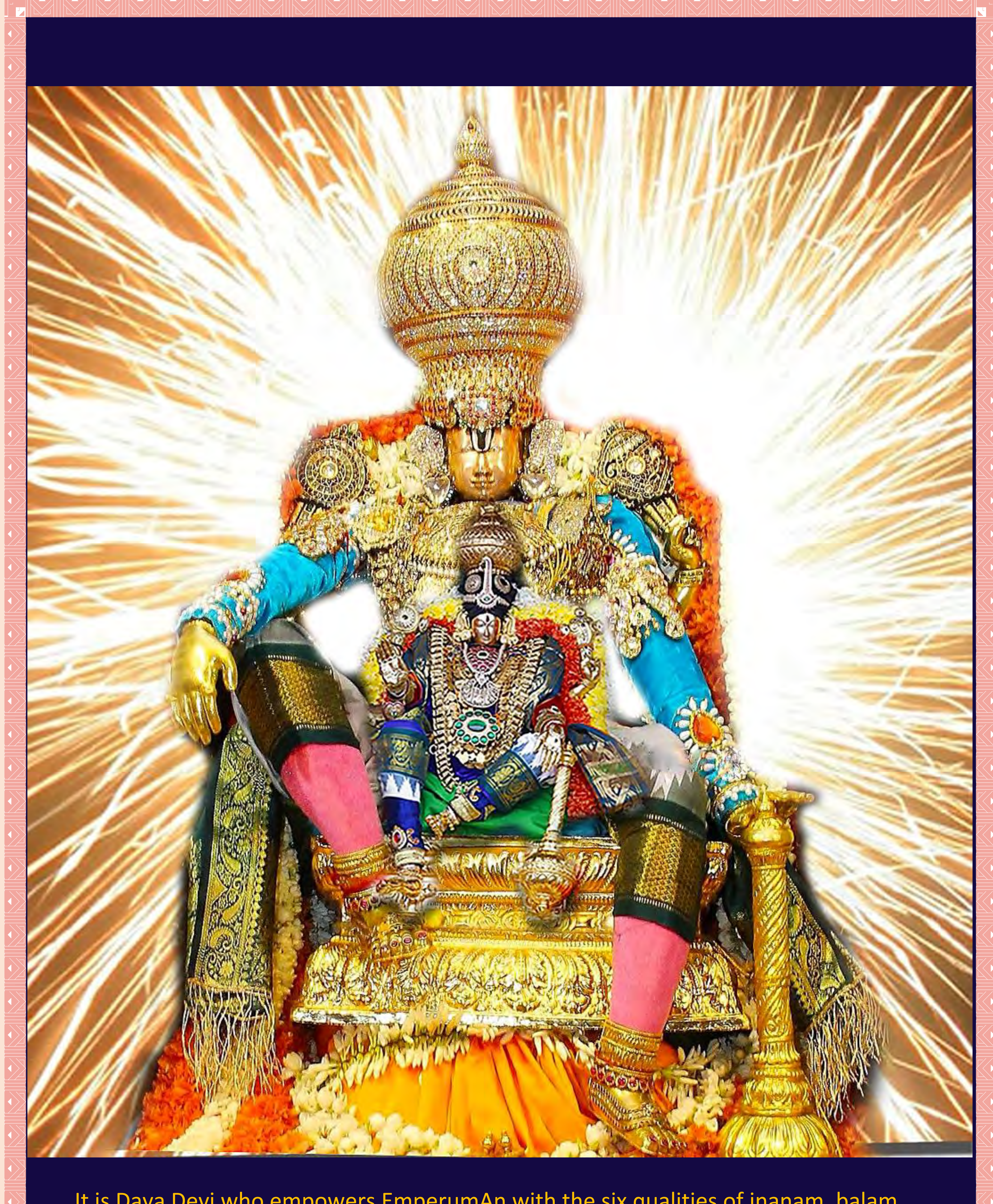


We quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin first. "Svami Desikan commences his answer with an acknowledgment of the fact that Lord Srinivasa is replete with numerous auspicious qualities. The number of auspicious qualities is so many that it becomes impossible to pay a tribute to all of them. Therefore, adiyen submits to Daya Devi herself the reason for this exclusive tribute in her praise. gR^ihamedhi is the salutation employed by Svami Desikan for Lord Srinivasa in this instance to denote that He is forever associated with His consort - thayar. This refers to Lord Srinivasa as a gruhastan. Among the four asramams (Brahmacharya, Gruhasta, Vanaprasta, and Sanyasa), GruhastAsramam has an elevated role. This is an asramam replete with usefulness for others; it is the asramam meant for performing rituals like yagas; it empowers one to engage in dharma karyams along with their wife (bhAryai). Therefore, Lord Srinivasa is eulogized as a gruhastan in this instance. It must be remembered that Lord Srinivasa is sarva rakshaka dIkshita (One who has sworn to protect those who surrender to him). In order to carry out this yajnam of protecting all seekers, the Lord is therefore constantly accompanied by his consort, Sri. It is helpful to recall the Mahaveera Vaibhavam salutation - namaH sItAsametAya rAmAya gR^ihamedhine - salutations to Lord Rama, who is united with Seetha as a gruhastan. Therefore, there is absolutely no wrong in referring to Lord Srinivasa as gruhamedhi. In the Dehalisa stuthi, Svami Desikan salutes the Trivikrama avataram and declares that even when incarnating as Vamana, he was never separated from Thayar due to the fact that She is eternally residing in his Vakshasthalam. However, the Lord was bound by the dharma of Brahmacharya Asramam and thus had to live the life of a celibate. bhikShochitaM prakaTayan prathamAshramaM tvaM kR^iShNAjinaM yavanikAM kR^itavAn priyAyAH. It must be noted that only two asramas are entitled for bhiksha - one is the Brahmacharya asrama and the other is Sanyasa asrama. Therefore, in order to request bhiksha from Mahabali, Lord

Narayana decided to incarnate in the prathama asramam (Brahmacharya). He adorned himself with KrishNajinam (deer-skin) covering. This was intended to mask Mahalakshmi residing in His vakshasthalam by means of a screen. The latter part of the slokam vyaktAkR^itEstava samIkShya bhujAntaretAm tvAmeva gopanagarIsha janAvidustvAm describes the Lord's transformation as Trivikrama, at which point everyone recognized Him to be the Lord of Mahalakshmi. Therefore, He was always in gruhasta asramam.

Now Svami Desikan describes the attributes of the gruhastan, Lord Srinivasa. These auspicious qualities include jnana, bala, aisvarya, virya, and sakti. In Tamil these are denoted by PaNbu. If these are good qualities, they are known as guNankaL. If they are of a bad nature, they are called dOsham. Just as in English good and bad qualities are designated as famous and notorious, in Tamil the analog is guNankal and dOshankal. In this context, the attributes of jnana, bala, aisvarya, virya, and sakti et al acquire the stature of gunams only on account of association with Daya Devi. Otherwise these are verily doshams. It must be noted that jnana, bala, aisvarya, virya, sakti, and tejas, which are instrumental in conferring on Lord Srinivasa Himself the title of ShADguNya pUrNan or Bhagavan being described by Svami Desikan as doshams bereft of the association of Daya Devi - no small matter. The first among these six attributes is bodha or jnana, which is accordingly called out at the outset. These six qualities have attained Lord Srinivasa. These qualities of Lord Srinivasa (sarvajnatvam, bala, His limitless strength, His infinite aisvaryam, His sakti - limitless power, His extreme effulgence) are enjoyed by all. All these guNams are useful for Lord Srinivasa as He engages in the task of protecting those who have sought Him. How so? For example, the ability to understand the state of each and every being in their respective conditions correctly is jnanam. All beings in the universe are entitled to the Lord's protection. Lord Srinivasa is the rakshakan. The ability to understand the correct state, inherent nature, innate self, the present plight of each being that seeks his protection is essential for Lord Srinivasa. Not only that, He needs to be aware of the means for redeeming these suffering jIvans. Only then can Lord Srinivasa carry out His task of protecting these jIvans. This is the established norm for anyone who is capable of offering protection. For example - a person incapable of swimming being drowned by the waters of a lake and being tossed hither and tither by the waves is watched by another individual who is a master of swimming on the other bank of the lake. He is moved to help the struggling individual, but beforehand he must be aware of the essential nature of the struggling individual, the means to rescue him, also determine if the individual is pretending to struggle fully knowing that he could swim. The swimmer willing to

rescue the drowning person must also have awareness of any adverse consequences that may arise from affording protection to the suffering individual. Only after taking into account all these factors can the capable swimmer rescue the struggling individual. In a like manner, Lord Srinivasa needs to be fully aware of the svarupam, svabhavam, and shrama visheSham of struggling baddha jivans in order to rescue them from their plight. The Lord's ability to rescue suffering jivans is aided by jnanam. However, only in the presence of Daya does jnanam function as an aid to rescue the suffering jivan. In the absence of Daya, jnanam can lead to viparita (extreme) behavior. Specifically, bereft of Daya Devi, when Lord Srinivasa is angered by the sastraic violations of the suffering jivan, jnanam can reveal all the transgressions of the jivan, causing the Lord to firm up his mind to punish the errant jivan. Additionally, bereft of Daya Devi, jnanam would also reveal the specific punishment to be meted out for each transgression on the part of the jivan. Therefore, Svami Desikan concludes that in the absence of Daya Devi jnanam by itself will only result in punishment for the baddha jIvan and no protection. Now if the Lord is bent on punishing the jivan as a result of jnanam bereft of Daya Devi, jnanam in its own right verily becomes a dosham rather than a gunam. Therefore, it is the association with Daya Devi alone that confers gunatvam to jnanam. Balam denotes the Lord's ability to engage in the acts of srushti, sthithi, and samharam (creation, protection, and destruction) of the universe. The Lord never tires of this activity. How does Daya Devi aid Balam in becoming a gunam while protecting a suffering jivan? Lord Srinivasa could conceivably be tired of beholding the transgressions of the suffering jivan. Or He could take the position, "Today I have rescued a handful of suffering jivans. I am exhausted and have had enough." Here is where Daya Devi steps in and ensures the Lord Srinivasa never tires of rescuing suffering jivans. Thus in association with Daya Devi, Balam becomes gunam. Next we come to aisvaryam. Lord Srinivasa is a svatantran (independent one) and prabhu (Master of the entire universe). He is one who executes His will without any stopping. Ishvarasya bhAvaH aishvaryam is the formal definition for aisvaryam. When it comes to the protection of suffering jivans, the Lord could demur on the basis of the fact that the errant jivan has committed innumerable transgressions. Also, a number of obstacles could arise in the process of protecting the jivan. However, Daya Devi comes to the rescue again by empowering the aisvarya gunam to aid the Lord in this process, i.e., His sworn position of unfailingly protecting those who surrender to Him. We then consider the role of viryam. Lord Srinivasa no doubt is the upAdana kAraNam (material cause) for the entire universe.



It is Daya Devi who empowers EmperumAn with the six qualities of jnanam, balam, aisvaryam, viryam, sakti and tejas!

Not only that the Lord is also the nimitta kAraNam (instrumental cause). That which ensures that there are no obstacles in this process comes about on account of Daya Devi. Therefore, it is Svami Desikan's considered position that viryam too acquires gunatvam only on account of association with Daya Devi. Next comes sakti. Some people are endowed with the power of accomplishing what they set out. However, the Lord is unique in that by His mere Will, He is able to execute anything that He thinks of. IccAmAtram prabhot sR^iShtiH. In this instance, Sakti acquires gunathvam when it comes to the matter of protecting suffering baddha jivans only on account of association with Daya Devi. Tejas is the effulgence associated with the Lord, who can execute anything He wills without the aid of anyone. Again only on account of association with Daya Devi does Tejas attain gunatvam when it comes to protecting suffering jivans. Therefore, in the absence of Daya Devi, jnana, bala, aisvarya, virya, sakti, and tejas lose their gunatvam and are verily transformed into doshams. Lord Srinivasa is no doubt Isvaran - one who rules over all beings sentient and insentient in the universe. The main role for such a ruler is the ability to protect those He rules over. Merely meting out punishment for crimes is insufficient. In the absence of the ability to protect these beings, the Lord loses his Isvaratvam. In order to preserve his Isvaratvam, these kalyana gunams need to be in association with Daya Devi to result in the ability to protect suffering jivans. In the absence of Daya Devi, these verily become doshams as declared in the salutation doSha bhaveyuH yadinAma daye tvayAvinA bhutAH. It must be noted that these gunams only when they are separated from Daya Devi, become doshams. However, just like the radiance cannot be separated from the sun, these gunams can never be separated from Daya Devi. In fact, as the empress of all the kalyana gunams, Daya Devi ensures that this separation never comes about. Therefore, Svami Desikan declares that he reserves his tribute exclusively for Daya Devi! Thus far, we have examined the vaibhavam of Daya Devi. Henceforth, we shall diiscuss the mahopakaram rendered by Daya Devi. Among the numerous upakarams rendered by Daya Devi, pralayam too is one. One may ask the question srushti and stithi may be acts of Daya. How could pralayam be an act of Daya? The answer is contained in the next verse."

We then summarize the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svami "Oh Daya Devi! The Lord has infinite qualities, the more fundamental ones- delineating the designation of Bhagavan, being jnanam, balam, aisvaryam, viryam, sakti, and tejas. Though depicted as gunas or virtues, they will turn out to be mere stigmas, doshas, defects, and faults, had it not been for your presence in Him!

1. The gunas acquire a virtue only by presence of Daya guNa.
2. We can easily comprehend the import of this verse. If Lord Srinivasa honors all my defects, my offences, and my predicament as a sinner, He might not take into account my circumstances. He will only decide to mete out suitable punishment. If He chooses to help me and ameliorate my penury He can. However, bereft of Daya Devi, He will not relent.
3. Therefore, we can crisply declare Daya alone confers a virtue on all His so-called virtues.
4. His qualities of jnanam, balam, sakti etc acquire a significance to us only by reason of Daya Devi. Daya Devi alone makes the Lord as a valid entity in our existence."





padmA sahAya karuNe

Slokam 16

आसृष्टि सन्ततानाम् अपराधानां निरोधिनीं जगतः ।

पद्मा सहाय करुणे प्रतिसञ्चर केलिमाचरसि ॥ १६ ॥

AsR^iShTi santatAnAm aparAdhAnAM nirodhinIM jagataH|

padmA sahAya karuNe pratisa~njara kelimAcarasi||16



The anubhavam of Valayapettai Sri U.Ve.Ramachar Svamin:

The sambodhanam here is padmA sahAya karuNe. Lord Srinivasa is responsible for the functions of srushti (creation), sthiti (protection), and pralayam (destruction) of the universe. However, it must be remembered that it is not Perumal alone, but with the qualifier that Perumal associated with Thayar as evidenced by the tribute padmA sahAya karuNe. Here it specifically stated that pralayam is act of Daya. How could this be so? Why is pralayam referred to first and not in the usual order of srushti, sthiti, laya? The answer to the second question appears first. According to the Vedam "tama AsIt tamasA gULamagre praketam" The vedam refers to pralayam first prior to srushti. Therefore, in keeping with the path outlined by the Vedam Svami Desikan too starts with pralayam first. There is another reason for this as well. Perumal takes avatarams in five forms - Param, Vyuham, Vibhavam, Archam, and Hardam. Among the Vyuha murtis of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha, Vasudeva is Shadgunya paripurnan-replete with all six auspicious qualities of jnana, bala, aisvarya, virya, sakti, and tejas. Thus Vasudeva can be a reference to Para form as well as Vyuha form of the Lord. On the other hand, those that are confined exclusively to vyuha forms are Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha.

The first one in this sequence, Sankarshana is endowed with the qualities of jnanam and balam, which are required for pralayam (destruction). In a like manner, Pradyumna is responsible for srushti, while Aniruddha is responsible for sthiti. In keeping with the Pancharatra Shastram, Svami Desikan thus commences with the function of pralayam. Next it is important to address how pralayam is an act of Daya. Bhagavan has given sentient beings arms, legs and karanakalebaram. The

eyes are meant to behold the Lord in his glory, while the ears are meant for engaging in hearing the praise of the Lord's kalyana gunams. This needs to result in the desire to beget moksham resulting in eternal kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple. Claiming the birthright of kaimkarya samrajyam is the purpose of endowing sentient beings with the said faculties. However, when these are put to inappropriate use such as engaging in idle gossip, finding fault with others, and egregious violations of sastraic prescriptions, the Lord sees sentient beings engaged in this act, and he wishes to stop these by placing obstacles in the path of these errant jivans. Therefore, he causes pralayam. The Indriyas are meant for engaging in satvishayam and satkaryam as expounded upon by Sri Kulashekara Azhvar in the Mukunda mala verse:

jihve kIrtaya keshavam muraripum ceto bhaja SrIdharam
pANidvandva samarcayAcyuta kathAH shrotra dvaya tvam shruNu"

Meaning: The tongue is meant for engaging in singing the praise of Lord Kesava, while the mind must be engaged in dhyanam of Sridharam, who is the enemy of Mura, whereas the hands must be engaged in archana for Achyuta, and the ears are meant for hearing the glory of the Lord through stories. The instruction for the feet is to seek out kshetrams of the Lord.

Therefore, all Indriyams are meant for use in Bhagavat Kaimkaryam. However, instead of engaging in these acts when sentient beings resort to viparitacharanam - acts that are the exact opposite to the purpose for which the indriyas are endowed, the Lord begins to wonder how he could correct the errant jivan. In this regard it is helpful to note the following drushtantam (perspective). There could be a few kids for a parent that are quite stubborn. In fact, so stubborn to the extreme and given to performing forbidden acts. One way to calm these children is to cajole them into going to sleep. Once rested after sleep the kids forget their prior instinct and engage in good acts that please their parents. In a like manner Daya Devi causes pralayam in order to coax the errant jivans into a state of slumber, after which they awake forgetting their previous disposition and thus could potentially engage in acts that please the Divine Couple. The salutation which used in this context, AsR^iShTi santatAnAm aparAdhAnAM nirodhinIM is quite instructive. aparAdhAnAM denotes the acts of Bhagavad apacharam engaged in by the errant jivan. It must also be borne in mind these are not stray acts or two, but egregious violations engaged in from beginning-less time. The obstacle to engage in such acts is pralayam.



Maha Pralayam is an act engaged by Sri Daya Devi to reform erring jivans!

The vasanas (proclivity to engage in sinful acts) persist for a long time. For example, if one is given to stealing in order to acquire wealth, as long as the individual is not caught in the act, the tendency will be to engage in repeated acts of stealing. Even when caught in the act, the tendency is to figure out ways to not get caught in future and engage in further acts of stealing, which becomes addictive. In a like manner, the vasanas that cause errant jivans to engage in sinful acts encourage further egregious violations. To put a stop to such acts, Daya Devi causes pralayam thereby rendering these jivans incapable of engaging in forbidden acts. Here it may be questioned would it not be sufficient to merely destroy those engaged in sinful acts? Why punish the entire universe by causing pralayam? The answer to this question lies in the fact that there is nobody in the universe that has not incurred Bhagavad apacharam. Only the extent to which these apacharams have occurred varies from one individual to another. Therefore, since all of them have the tendency to engage in Bhagavad apacharams, Daya Devi causes Pralayam in an attempt to reform them. pratisa~njara kelimAcarasi is the salutation used to describe the act of pralayam (pratisa~njara) as if it were a sport (kelimAcarasi). Three important usages of Svami Desikan deserve to be noted in this slokam. santatam, pratisa~njaram, and nirodham. These arise from Natya Sastram in the context of abhinayam. santatam is the act of singing with the accompanying instruments. nirodham denotes the act of mesmerizing the audience with the act of dancing. pratisa~njaram denotes the act of the dancer taking a step backward while fully making eye contact with the audience. These three usages denote the abhinayam in the dance of Daya Devi. This act of pratisa~njaram (maha pralayam) is therefore a sport engaged in by Daya Devi in the form a dance as expounded upon by Svami Desikan. In the next verse Daya Devi's role in creation (srushti) and protection (sthiti) will be glorified.

The anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin is summarized next.

"The creation of the universe has been going on with ever-succeeding species. The world's sins also go on. Of course, beings with discernment and discrete action leave the world upon liberation. The others go on re-cycling in birth and death. How to give a sealing? The Deluge is planned. As in the domain of home reconstruction, a home is first demolished prior to rebuilding, in a like manner deluge is the prelude to the new cycle of creation. This is due to the Daya gunam of Lord Srinivasa. Appropriately, the deluge is referred to as the lovely retreat of a dancer (Sri Daya Devi), from the dance-stage. This is captured through the salutation pratisa~njara keli."

Slokam 17

अचिद्विशिष्टान् प्रळये जन्तूनवलोक्य जात निर्वेदा ।

करण कळेबर योगं वितरसि वृषशैल नाथ करुणे त्वम् ॥ १७ ॥

achit avishiShTAn praLaye jantU navalokya jAta nirvedaa|

karaNa kalebara yogaM vitarasi vR^iShashaila nAtha karuNe tvam||17



The anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin is quoted first.

"Daya Devi renders upakarams to us. In this context, it was established in the previous verse that praLayam too is an upakaram for suffering jivans undertaken by Daya Devi. Specifically in the manner of calming a recalcitrant child that insists on egregiously violating the commands of parents by putting the child to sleep, Daya Devi causes praLayam, which is a forced obstruction to the acts of violation on the part of baddha jivans. In this verse the role of Daya Devi in creation (srushti). vR^iShashaila nAtha karuNe is the sambodhanam in this verse. The very address of vR^iShashaila nAtha karuNe by Svami Desikan is quite evocative in that it needs to be understood in the context of Lord Srinivasa accompanied by Daya Devi forsaking residence in Sri Vaikuntam and arriving on top of the Venkatachalam Hill to grace baddha jivans. Svami Desikan's tribute now pertains to the role of Daya Devi who has caused a deep slumber for her errant children. However, due to praLayam their slumber is so deep that they are blissfully unaware of anything that is taking place around them. To fully appreciate the role of Daya Devi, it is important to understand the state of all beings during praLayam from a sampradayic standpoint. Here it is useful to dwell on the difference between upanyAsam and kAlakshepam. The latter is a formal study of the scripture, where every word is carefully analyzed and expounded upon. Thus, missing out on the exposition of even a single padam results in an incomplete understanding of the sastram. However, an upanyasam is unlike kalakshepam in that it would superficially touch upon the sastraic principles. Thus, if one goes to sleep in the middle of an upanyasam, upon waking up one can to some extent understand the purport without losing too much of the context. The concept of praLayam is one that is in between an upanyasam and kalakshepam. According to our Siddhantam, the jivan is eternal. It cannot be destroyed. The jivan is distinct from the ParamAtma, Lord Narayana. Just as the ParamAtma is indestructible so too is the jivan. Additionally, the jivan is endowed with

dharmabhUta jnAnam - the ability to comprehend what is happening in its surroundings. The jivan understands everything about its surroundings through dharmabhUta jnAnam. This is inherent to all jivans. dharmabhUta jnAnam is subject to sankocha vikAsam, namely expansion and contraction. For example, a lit lamp in an open space illuminates the surrounding. However, a lamp covered in a basket offers no such illumination. In a like manner, dharmabhUta jnAnam is subject to expansion and contraction on account of karma. All jivAtmas are endowed with the same svarUpam (essential nature) and the same dharmabhUta jnAnam. Why then does the expansion or contraction take place? It is on account of their puNyam and pApam. Due to this fact, some may be rich, some may be extremely intelligent, some may be endowed with extraordinary knowledge about a specific subject, while some may be endowed with extremely poor intellect. These differences arise on account of one's karma, which causes the expansion or contraction of dharambhUta jnAnam and thus dictates their present state. This is the considered position of Sri BhAshyakarar. This concept has been elaborated upon in considerable detail by Svami Desikan in Srimad Rahasya Trayasaram. This concept needs to be borne in mind. Another salient point to be noted in this context is that of karma. Karma is existent from beginning-less time and is therefore eternal. This is akin to a seed planted resulting in the growth of a tree, which then sheds more seeds resulting in further growth of trees. The central question that arises in this context is which came first - the tree or the seed? Such a question has no answer in a like manner denoted as bIjAnkura nyAyam the relationship between a jivan and its Karma needs to be understood. Therefore, according to our Siddhantam the jivan is existent from time immemorial and so too is karma. However, there is one important difference. The jivan is indestructible however, karma can be destroyed. Specifically, by undertaking the path of either Saranagati or Bhakti Yogam, karma can be destroyed and this enables the jivan to attain Moksham. These concepts are fundamental to gaining an understanding of the import of this verse. In the state of praLayam, the jivan is in eKArNavam - surrounded by the deluge waters. The body acquired by the jivan due to prakruti sambandham (contact) is shed. Prakruti is a mixture of the three gunas - Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. The sariram consisting of the pancha bhutas results from a combination of the three gunas and is therefore destructible. What then happens during praLayam? The jivans get attached to ParamAtma. Additionally, in this state the jivans have completely contracted dharmabhUta jnAnam. In this respect the jivan becomes like an inanimate object that is devoid of all senses unable to know if it is hot or cold or rainy. The jivan therefore loses its shape, form, name, and all manner of distinction between

classes of human beings, animals and the like. This inert state is what prevails during mahApraLayam. This needs to be accounted for properly by sastraic pramanams. In this context the relevant pramanam is the fact that the entire universe is a part of Lord Narayana's body. During praLayam, the jivan in its inert state becomes one with the Lord's body. Daya Devi beholds this and wonders "these jIvans have lost all shape, form, classification and ability to comprehend their surroundings and are no different from sand and stone. How can I possibly be a silent spectator when this is taking place? Should I not offer a mechanism for them to gain a new existence by which they may be able to redeem themselves? These are my children. Should I not act in a timely manner to ensure their wellbeing?" Here it is appropriate to quote the anubhavam of a great Acharya, who dwells upon the Lord resting on a banyan leaf in the form of a little child surrounded by the waters of praLayam. The reclining posture of the Lord has a beauty of its own.



karAravindena padAravindaM mukharavinde viniveshayantam|

vaTasya patrasya puTe shayAnaM bAlaM mukundaM manasAsmarAmi||

Meaning: The little child with lotus-hands, lotus-feet, lotus-lips is sucking the big toe of his foot reclining on the banyan leaf. My mind contemplates on this infant Lord Mukunda.

Here the anubhavam of Sri Parasara Bhattar becomes important. Why is the Lord sucking the big toe of his foot while reclining on the banyan leaf? In the verse vaTadala madhishaiyya ranga dhAman, Sri Bhattar wonders whether the Lord is having a flashback to his Trivikrama avataram, wherein his giant strides measured the entire universe. Here he is perhaps reflecting on what the universe looks like. Be that as it may what is the reason for sucking the big toe of his foot? Sri Bhattar answers this through the salutation vaishNava bhogya lipsayA. The Lord is wondering here "Everyone in the universe seeks refuge in my feet. Finally, I have a chance to enjoy my own feet and see how it tastes." This is the reason for sucking at the toe.

Returning to Daya Devi, she beholds Her children in this inert state and is greatly moved by their plight as denoted by the salutation achit avishiShTAn praLaye. This is followed by the salutation jantUn avalokya. The reference jantUn depicts the state of the jivan that is not distinct from any inanimate form. jAta nirvedaa describes Daya Devi's anguish at the plight of her children, who are now in this inert state indistinguishable from an inanimate object. She wonders "These beings deserve to be elsewhere in a state with shape, form, senses, and intellect. Instead, they are reduced to mere inanimate forms having nothing." Svami Desikan describes the jivan's elevated position in the Srimad RahasyatrayasAram tribute maNivara iva shaureH nitya hR^ityopajIvyam, i.e., the jivan is entitled to the status of that of the Kaustubha gem (denoted as svataH siddham), which adorns the Lord's chest. This is the inherent right of every jivan. kaluShavimativindhan kimkaratvAdirajyam vidhipariNatibhedAt vIkshitatvena kAle kuru parishadhupagyam prApya gopAyatitvam. Bhagavad Kaimkaryam is the kingdom that has no boundaries - AdirAjyam. This is the inherent right for all jivans. However, losing this elevated position, the jivan due to a muddled state of mind, is struggling. How pathetic is this condition? The jivan deserves to be alongside Ananta, Garuda, and Vishvaksena rendering Nitya Kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana. Instead, they have been reduced to achit (insentient) state. Daya Devi is greatly moved by the plight of these jivans and resolves it is impossible for Me to be a mute spectator when My children are suffering.



It is well and truly the act of Daya Devi alone that results in Srushti

It is important to make the connection to the elaboration of verse 6 here, wherein Daya Devi's offering as the Mother of the Universe was discussed in the context of showering sentient jivans with jnAnam of jIvAtma svarUpam (essential nature of the jIvAtma), paramAtma svarUpam (Essential nature of ParamAtma), upAya svarUpam (means to attain the ParamAtma), phala svarUpam (the benefit gained by attaining Paramatma) and phala virodhi (Obstacles that come in the way of attaining Phalam).

karaNa kaLebarayogam vitarasi is the upakaram rendered by Daya Devi here. karaNakaLebarayogam is the endowment of arms and legs, body and senses to the jIvan. A subtle (sUkshmam) message from Svami Desikan in this context needs to be understood. All Atmas are endowed with the Indriyas (senses). The manifestation of these Indriyas is in the form of eyes, ears, arms, feet and the like. Some beings may appear to be blind, deaf or dumb. This may give the impression that these beings are bereft of eyes, ears, and the like. Although the jivan is endowed with eyes, ears etc, they are not functioning normally. However, the jivan is still able to know what is being said, perceive everything that the eyes can see. In this context Daya Devi endows the jivan with perfectly functioning body replete with sensory organs, fully accomplishing the manifestations of the senses (indriyAs). The tribute vitarasi denotes the act of Daya Devi in endowing the jivan with the Indriyas and an associated Atma. The tribute thus seems to suggest "Oh Mother Daya Devi! You alone transform the jivan from its inert insentient state to a fully sentient being". Here it needs to borne in mind that the Lord is responsible for Srushti (creation). However, it is only the Daya of the Lord moved by the plight of suffering jivans that causes him to undertake the act of creation. Therefore, it is well and truly the act of Daya Devi alone that results in Srushti. This allows the sentient being to experience the joys and sorrows that ensue. Therefore, this verse is the mangalasasanam for Daya Devi's most compassionate role in the act of creation. It is instructive to observe the most compassionate thought process of Daya Devi "My children are suffering greatly on account of being in this inert state. May be if they are given another opportunity as sentients, they may reform themselves and seek the Lord's Lotus feet to enjoy kimkaratvAdhi rAjyam".

We next quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili PatracharPatracharian Swamin:

Oh Daya Devi! I visualize deluge time. The whole universe remains inactive; there were non-sentient materials all around, along with them lay souls, sentients, albeit as good as dead; as inactive and as non-sentient as lifeless materials. You see them all with utmost pity for their condition. You even develop a feeling of disgust.

For a moment your imaginative thought process runs along these lines. “What a nice birth he had! What excellent opportunities were available to this jivan in the earlier life. Unfortunately, the jIvan wasted it all and indulged in sinful activity. He could easily have resorted to an Acharya, redeemed himself and secured Moksham. What a terrible discomfiture for me to see him thus, when he could have been in the elevated state of Nitya Kaimkaryam.” You then out of utmost compassion confer on that soul a suitable body and limbs to suit his stock of merits; see that he gets a new existence. Your hope and wish is that he makes use of the new stock of body and wit to attain salvation. In your motherly fondness, you wish and work for everyone’s liberation. Therefore, you are matchless in this regard Oh Mother!”



Slokam 18

अनुगुण दशार्पितेन श्रीधर करुणे समाहित स्नेहा ।

शमयसि तमः प्रजानां शास्त्रमयेन स्थिर प्रदीपेन ॥ १८ ॥

anuguNa dashArpitena shrIdhara karuNe samAhita snehaa|

shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM shAstramayena sthira pradIpena||18



The anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svami is quoted first.

"So far we have examined the role of Daya Devi in causing Pralayam as well as Srushti. Once the task of Srushti has been completed next comes the task of protection. This too is beautifully carried out by Daya Devi declares Svami Desikan. When examining the lakshanam of Brahman, Lord Sriman Narayana, it is affirmed by the Sastras, that one who is the cause of creation of the universe (srushti), its protection (sthiti), and its destruction (laya) alone is known as Brahman. This undoubtedly points to Lord Narayana. Sri Bhashyakar follows the lead of the Vedanta Sutras, which attest to this fact and documents it verbatim in Sri Bhashyam. Svami Desikan follows the path of Sri Bhashyakarar by first declaring that Daya Devi is the cause of pralayam, srushti, in verses 16 and 17. In this verse, Svami Desikan affirms that Daya Devi is responsible for the task of protection (sthiti). In this context, it must be observed that Daya Devi during Srushti has endowed sentient beings with limbs and other senses (karaNa kaLebaram). Now it becomes important to use these faculties in an appropriate manner and not engage in forbidden acts. How to point the jivan in the direction of Perumal? Daya Devi has endowed the sentient being with arms, legs, and other sense organs to engage in glorifying Perumal and to find the means for attaining Him through a qualified Acharya. Instead, if the jivan begins to indulge in sensual pleasures with utter disregard for Bhagavan, these senses begin to act in a manner counter to their intended purpose. Therefore, merely endowing the sentient with karaNa kaLebaram is not sufficient. It becomes imperative to ensure that these are put to use for their intended purpose. Therefore, Daya Devi performs another important task as outlined in the verse anuguNa dashArpitena shrIdhara karuNe samAhita snehaa| shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM shAstramayena sthira pradIpena || Daya Devi's elevated role in protecting the sentient beings in documented here. The analogy used here is that of a child endowed with arms and legs standing at the

threshold of its home not knowing which direction to move in (East, West, North, or South). Furthermore, the child is unaware of the fact that danger lurks when moving in one direction, while another is replete with sinful acts and a third direction brings great joy. Since the child is unaware of this, who would educate the child with regard to these items. It is undoubtedly, the responsibility of the elders of the home. How are they aware of these things? The underlying assumption is that they have studied the sastrams and therefore possess the necessary knowledge and discernment. In this context, Daya Devi endows the sentient being with sastraic wisdom through encouragement to seek Acharya sambandham. In almost all of Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis, it is customary to observe his reverence for Azhvars and Acharyas, who he glorifies as beacon light bearers that illumine the path of the seekers through conferring SAstra jnanam. Here, jnanam is referred to as the lamp. When Daya Devi blesses the sentient being with the lamp of jnanam, it becomes customary to follow the path treaded by the great masters (Acharyas). The reference here is to Poigai Azhvar's outpouring

vaiyam takaLiyA * vArkaDalE neyyAka *
veyya katirOn viLakkAka * ceyya
cuDar AzhiyAn aDikkE * cUTTinEn col mAlai *
iDarAzhi nIngukavE enRu

The mangalasasanam of Poigai Azhvar is like a lamp which requires Adharam (takaLi), oil, and a wick to light the lamp. In this regard, the Azhvar views the earth as the takaLi, the oceans form the oil, and the Sun as the ghee. It is important to observe the Azhvar's usage here. In the ancient practice, even if a lamp was burning on oil, it was customary to provide the instruction "please add ghee to the lamp". From this it must be understood that a lamp lit with ghee is the favored option. The oil lamp lighting is a latter-day practice. Therefore, the usage vAr kaDalE neyyAka reflects this fact. What is it then from which light emanates? The Azhvar answers this through the tribute veyya katirOn viLakkAka. In this manner the Azhvar offers his mangalasasanam to the feet of Lord Narayana, bearing the Sankam and Chakram through the tribute ceyya cuDar AzhiyAn aDikkE cUTTinEn col mAlai. The inner meaning of the Azhvar's outpouring is that may the obstacles that arise in my path of attaining Lord Narayana be destroyed (aniShTa nivrR^itti and iShTa prApti). In a like manner BhudathAzhvar renders his mangalasasanam to Lord Narayana through the Pasuram

anpE takaLiyA * ArvamE neyyAka *
inpuruku cintai itu tiriyaa *



nanpuruki j~nAna cuDar viLakku ERRinEn *
nAranarku * j~nAna thamizh purintha nAn

anpE takaLiyA - here the reference is to the love, Bhakti, for Lord Narayana and the desire to attain Him. This is the tagaLi. The intent to attain him is the ghee, the jnanam is the wick. This lamp is lit for Naranarku (Lord Narayana alone).

Therefore, everything that functions as an aid to attain Perumal verily becomes a lamp.

Sri Parasara Bhattar in the Rangaraja Sthavam declares:

hartum tamaH sat asatI vivektum IshaH

mAnam pradIpam iva kAruNikaH dadAti |

tena avalokya kR^itinaH paribhunjate tam

tatra eva ke api capalAH shalabhI bhavanti ||

Perumal blesses us with the lamp of Sastram to destroy the darkness of nescience. It is meant to endow one with the power of discrimination between good and bad. The jnanam provided by the sastram confers the ability to discern good from the bad. This elevated sastram is bequeathed to jivatmas by the extremely compassionate Emperuman with the view to realizing the fact that attaining Emperuman is the ultimate purushartham (desired end state) after a careful and discriminating analysis of all that is good and bad. Those enabled by the discernment afforded by the sastra jnanam use the lamp to attain Lord Narayana and enjoy Him. At the same time the ViTTil poocchi (firefly) falls into the lamp and is burnt. This analogy is used to describe the plight of some even though endowed with sastraic knowledge, who seem bent on enjoying alpa (trivial) and asthira (transient) benefits. They are verily like the fire flies destroyed by the fire in the lamp. Following the path of the masters, the Azhvars and Sri. Parasara Bhattar, Svami Desikan instructs us in the fact that out of extreme compassion, Daya Devi upon completing the task of creation now blesses sentient beings with the lamp of Sastra jnanam with the view to empowering the jivan to use the discernment between good and bad to realize that all senses and faculties should be put to use for the singular goal of attaining Lord Narayana. Now it becomes important to examine the role of the Sastram through the tribute anuguNa dashArpitena samAhita snehaa tamaH prajAnAM shamayasi shAstramayena sthira pradIpena. What is the glory of the Sastram? One can look at all objects that are in one's surrounding environment. However, it is impossible to see one's own face. When viewed through a mirror, the face is revealed. However, this does not allow viewing one's back. To enable this, one can place two mirrors - one in the front and one in the back. This pertains to pratyakSham. However, there are some things that cannot be seen via pratyakSham. Those things can be inferred (anumAnam). For example, when one is seated and hears the noise from thunder, one comes to the conclusion that there are clouds in the sky and therefore, it is causing thunder and

it is going to rain. However, things that cannot be discerned either through anumAnam or pratyakSham have to be necessarily learnt from Sastram. For example, our srushti is an item which is beyond comprehension through pratyakSham or anumAnam. Nobody can account for the precise details of srushti through these means. In retrospect, using principles of science *a posteriori* arguments can be advanced however, *a priori*, it becomes impossible to precisely account for. For example one may be extremely intelligent, while another may be extremely dull, a third extremely handsome, a fourth extremely wealthy. Would it be possible to account for this fact prior to their birth using mechanisms of anumAnam and pratyakSham? Absolutely not. How then can this be understood? The only recourse for understanding this is the Sastram. One who has mastered the sastram is therefore referred to as dIrgha darshi (far-sighted one). The sastram reveals what is forthcoming almost like witnessing the event in pratyakSham. Therefore, Svami Desikan uses slEDai in the salutation "samAhita sneha" Daya Devi is extremely affectionate towards the sentient beings. It is in fact this affection for sentients that causes her to transform them from achit/inert state during praLayam to sentient beings. At the same time, it must be noted that the sentient beings are like lamps. These lamps are the takaLi. With mere takaLi, nothing is possible. On the other hand, Daya Devi ensures that the takaLi has a wick and is immersed in oil so that it can be lit to produce light. This is denoted by the salutation samAhita sneha. Next comes the tribute anuguNa dashArpitena. Now that the tagaLi has been endowed with sufficient oil a wick needs to be in place for the lamp to be lit. Svami Desikan here refers to the wick as the gunams - satva, rajas, and tamas. Another reference to the lamp is coming about from the Sastram. Daya Devi endows the jivans out of her utmost affection with the Sastram. These Sastrams reveal that which needs to be known by each jivan according to their capacity for understanding the inherent messages. In other words, the sastrams afford considerable flexibility to account for what if scenarios. It is a common perception that sastraic prescriptions are quite stringent and rigid. In fact this is not so because, it takes into consideration one's state of being and ability to adhere to the injunctions. For example, bAla (children) vR^iddha (aged ones) and athura should not partake of food during grahaNam (eclipse time). This then brings into question the duration of the eclipse. However, it becomes impractical for an aged person with sugar problems or a little child to remain without food for a 10-hour duration. In a like manner women (sthrI) and vR^iddhas (extremely aged ones) also have exceptions according to the sastrams. The sastram also takes into account the limitations of time and space and thus afford considerable flexibility for adherence.

In a like manner Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita "cAtur varNyaM mayA sR^iShTaM" The four varnas were created by the Lord with a view to assigning roles and work in accordance with one's ability. Accordingly, varnashrama dharma is tailored according to individual capacity. Therefore, all tasks prescribed by the Sastram are not meant for all. There are exceptions. Thus, the Sastrams do not adopt a "one size fits all" approach. However, it is a different matter if one violates these prescriptions despite the flexibility afforded. Each jivan is a mixture of satva, rajas, and tamas. Therefore, it is entirely possible that one appears to be extremely angry or cruel to behold. However, the individual would in reality have a very kind heart. Some others may appear extremely pleasant on the outside but may be extremely ill-intended. However, the sastram is non-discriminating in terms of blessing both types equally. In the context of the shAstraM denoting a lamp, the salutation guNam is the thread and dasha is the wick. The wick made from this thread is referenced here by Swami Desikan. This is the slEDai employed here. It is instructive to observe that instead of the usage shAstrena, Svami Desikan employs the salutation shAstramayena. It is only on account of the presence of the sastrams like tarkam and vyAkaraNam that one is able to comprehend the messages from the sastrams. These function as auxiliary aids to understand the sastraic injunctions and serve in a manner that is not opposed to the import of the sastram. The lamp denoted by the sastrams differs from ordinary lamps in that a strong breeze can extinguish ordinary lamps. However, the salutation sthirapradhIpena signifies the fact that the lamp of the sastras always shines brightly and cannot be extinguished. What is it that Daya Devi does on account of endowing jivans with the lamp of the sastrams? This is answered through the salutation shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM. The emphasis on the salutation prajAnAm is noteworthy, which denotes "Her Children" - which means all sentient beings in the universe. By endowing them with the lamp of the sastram, She banishes the darkness arising from nescience for all jivans. The inner meaning is that these sastrams banish the darkness of ignorance within each jivan by endowing them with knowledge to discern the good from the bad, the acts that need to be performed (niyama) and the acts to be abstained from (yama). Most importantly, the sastrams bless each jivan with the knowledge that attaining Lord Narayana is the ultimate puruShArtha and that all other pleasures and benefits are trivial and transient. The philosophical import of this slokam is tremendous. In fact each slokam of the Daya Satakam is a gem in its own right. In the context of this verse an important question arises. Daya Devi completes the task of Srushti. She then out of extreme compassion for the jivas endows them with the lamp of the Sastrams which banishes external and internal darkness.



shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM

Now what about the fruits arising from conforming to the Sastraic prescriptions? The Sastrams outline mechanisms for obtaining the four fold fruits of dharma, artha, kAma, and mokSha. If one follows the prescription for each of these, one is assured of gaining the sought benefit. Who enables this? It is undoubtedly Daya Devi."

Next the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin is quoted:

"Oh Daya Devi! You are like a mother to all creatures, to whom you gave a body; a shape, a sentience, a drive for action et al. With a mother's fondness, you arrange for stationing large oil-lamps, adding plenty of oil, furnishing suitable wicks too; darkness in the home is removed. The newborn baby will otherwise cry in fear and anguish.

As a mother does it at a home where a newly born baby is nurtured, Karuna Devi, a fond mother to all, since they are Her children, provides a permanent guide-lamp of the Sastras. This lamp will never be extinguished. It has been lit and kept to guide us permanently. In removing darkness of either kind - external and internal, Daya Devi acts as a benevolent mother. It is to be noted in this context that:

1. The hoary Sastras, the Vedas, the epics, the Puranas, Smritis are the perennial guidebooks to us to behave in the right direction.

2. Thus, the role of Daya Devi continues from Pralaya, Srushti, and instructing her children in good morals through the Sastras.



Slokam 19

रूढा वृषाचलपतेः पादे मुख कान्ति पत्रलच्छाया ।

करुणे सुखयसि विनतान् कटाक्ष विटपैः करापचेय फलैः ॥ १९ ॥

rUDhA vR^iShAcalapateH pAde mukha kAnti patralacChAyaa|

karuNe sukhayasi vinatAn kaTAkSha viTapaiH karApaceya phalaiH||19



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valaypettai Ramachar Svamin:

"rUDhA vR^iShAcalapateH pAde mukha kAnti patralacChAyaa|karuNe sukhayasi vinatAn kaTAkSha viTapaiH karApaceya phalaiH Every vakyam (line or sentence) of the Sastram becomes incomplete without a statement of the resulting benefit. Therefore, every injunction of the Sastram necessarily documents the benefit arising from the practice of the prescribed instruction. For example, if the sastraic instruction is to surrender to the feet of Lord Narayana, the first question is what is the benefit? Anticipating this, the sastram declares that it rids one of all sins and ensures niratishaya kaimkaryam (ceaseless service) in Sri Vaikuntam, which is beyond the bonds of space and time, where one becomes free from the pangs of thirst, hunger, and sorrow eternally taking delight from the performance of uninterrupted kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple. Upon hearing this one accepts the sastraic command and performs sharaNAgati (surrender) to Lord Narayana. Therefore, when the sastram instructs us in the process to undertake an act, it is always accompanied by a statement of the benefit resulting from the act. Now the sastram has declared the manner in which to obtain the benefit of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple in Sri Vaikuntam. The next question that arises is "How does Daya Devi confer this benefit?" This is answered in the salutation rUDhA vR^iShAcalapateH pAde mukha kAnti patralacChAyaa. Here the reference is to the sacred Tiruvenkatam Hill, which is replete with trees and creepers. These are not mere trees and creepers but trees and creepers with copious leaves. Not only that these leaves have bountiful offerings of flowers and fruit. When traversing through such a hill one may lay hands on a low hanging guava fruit and partake of it or one may pluck a flower from one of the creepers to adorn their hair. In a like manner all purusharthas that need to be enjoyed are readily granted by Daya Devi. If there exists a tree or creeper, there needs to be an AdhAram (support). Here what is the support for the creeper/tree known as Daya Devi? vR^iShAcalapateH pAde rUDhA

is the salutation which answers this question. Namely, the support for Daya Devi lies at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa. This is the genesis so to speak for Daya Devi. It may then be asked, what is so great about the Feet of Lord Srinivasa? It may be acceptable if the Lord's manas (mind) was the source of Daya Devi. However, why the Feet? It must be borne in mind that Lord Srinivasa is inherently most compassionate. However, when He beholds errant baddha jivans engaged in egregious violations of sastraic commands, He is wondering how to shower His mercy on them and bring them to the right path. He is looking for an excuse to make this happen. At this moment when the Lord is wondering how to bless the jivan, if one surrenders to the Feet of the Lord Srinivasa, the torrential flow of Daya Devi is immediately unlocked. The surrender serves as the excuse to open up the flood gates of Daya Devi. Nothing else needs to be performed. Therefore, this is the parama (ultimate) bhogyam for all Sri Vaishnavas. vaiShNava bhogya lipsayaa is the salutation employed by Sri Parasara Bhattar to document this fact. The salutation vR^iShAcalapateH pAde rUDhA is further examined. Lord Srinivasa is saluted by His bhaktas according to their ability governed by their present state. Thus, the Feet have been saluted. Some may do this in pratyaksham at the Venkatachalam Hills while some others may prostrate to His feet through a picture. Lord Ranganatha's hand has the posture of abhayam to suggest that the performance of sharaNAgati once is sufficient. On the other hand, Lord Srinivasa's right hand points to His Feet. A mangalasasanam for this is performed in Sri Venkatesa Prapatti through the salutation

pArthaya tatsadR^ishasArathinA tvayaiva

yau darshitau svacaraNau sharaNaM vrajeti |

bhUyo(a)pi mahyamiha tau karadarshitau te

shrIvenkaTesha caraNau sharaNaM prapadye ||

Oh Lord you instructed Partha as his charioteer in the parama purushartham, namely Your Lotus Feet! It is this same Feet that is captivating all. This is the one that needs to be sought and enjoyed. This is being revealed by Lord Srinivasa through His hand pointing to His Feet. Due to the Feet being the origin of Daya Devi, they are the parama bhogyam (ultimate source of enjoyment) for all Sri Vaishnavas. Svami Desikan's tribute is meant to salute Daya Devi as the Karpaka Vruksham (wish fulfilling tree), which has its origins in the Feet of Lord Srinivasa. Next the salutation mukha kAnti patralacChAyaa is examined. What are the leaves that adorn this tree/creeper known as Daya Devi? It is undoubtedly the kAnti (radiance) arising from the mukha mandalam of Lord Srinivasa.



Sri Daya Devi is the treasure house of low hanging fruit and brings great joy to those who have surrendered to the Feet of Lord Srinivasa

How does the radiance arising from the face of Lord Srinivasa take shape at His Feet? It needs to be borne in mind that the Lord is quite anxious for His Children (errant baddha jivans engaging in repeated sastraic violations) to come seeking His Feet. Thus,His look is one of utmost concern and anguish. However, when these take the shape of the leaves in the creeper/tree known as Daya Devi, who originates at the Feet of Srinivasa, the care-worn look on His face is replaced by matchless radiance. This arises due to the fact that the Lord is now satisfied that the purpose for which He incarnated has now been accomplished. The tejas (radiance) on His face, has verily transformed itself into a leaf in the creeper known as Daya Devi affirms Svami Desikan. Perumal is glorified as Nilamegha Shyaman. Next His radiance is described in terms of a leaf in the creeper known as Daya Devi. It is important to note that the leaves come in different shades. To start with the leaves have a unique light shade of green. While yielding fruit, these are transformed into dark shade of green. Now it is the time for Lord Srinivasa to grant fruits. Daya Devi is the fruit-granting instrument. Therefore, the radiance from the face of Lord Srinivasa, which has taken the form of leaves in the creeper known as Daya Devi now acquire a dark shade of green. Next the salutation karApaceya phalaiH is examined. Svami Desikan describes the fruits and flowers as being ready for plucking with one's hands. For example, if one beholds the betel nut trees in Karnataka and Kerala, they would be extremely tall. The betel nut bearing branches would be up high. Since the tree itself is quite slender, not too many people would venture to climb it. Therefore, even though the betel nut is useful, it is difficult to pluck from the tree. However, kaTAkSha viTapaiH karApaceya phalaiH is the salutation employed by Svami Desikan with regards to Daya Devi. Due to the kaTAksham (compassionate eye-glances of the Lord), the fruit and flower laden creeper known as Daya Devi is in a form suitable for plucking even by a little child. vinatAn sukhayasi is the svArasyam that deserves closer attention. Those who perform a surrender to Lord Srinivasa's feet are welcomed by Daya Devi with open arms seeming to suggest "behold this tree which offers as fruits, the sought after purushArthas - dharma, artha, kAma, and mokSham. Please feel free to take as much as you want of any of these with your own hands!" In this manner Daya Devi brings great joy to those who have surrendered to the Feet of Lord Srinivasa. In the Raghuvamsam, Kalidasa describes the fact that he is incapable of scaling tall trees to pluck fruits. Instead, he desires the low hanging easily accessible fruits. In a like manner Svami Desikan describes Daya Devi as the treasure house of low hanging fruit. In a slight variation, Svami Desikan uses the Saranagati Dipika salutation :

udbAhubhAvamapahAya yathaiva kharvaH

prAMshuM phalArthamabhiyAcati yogicintya |

evaM suduShkaramupAyagaNaM vihAya

sthAne niveshayati tasya vicakShNastvAm ||

Svami Desikan's genius comes through in this verse. "A short man is incapable of plucking fruits from a tall tree. Therefore, he requests the help of a tall man for this purpose. In a like manner, adiyen is incapable of undertaking the rigors of jnana yogam, karma yogam, and bhakti yogam. Instead, Oh Deepa Prakasa! You must stand in their stead and grant me the benefit arising from the performance of jnana yogam, karma yogam, and bhakti yogam." Rather than someone else plucking the fruit and allowing us to enjoy them Daya Devi allows one to directly pluck the fruits and enjoy them. The taste of such fruit is several folds greater than that obtained from another that has plucked them. Sri Parasara Bhattar performs mangalasasanam for this fact through the tribute:

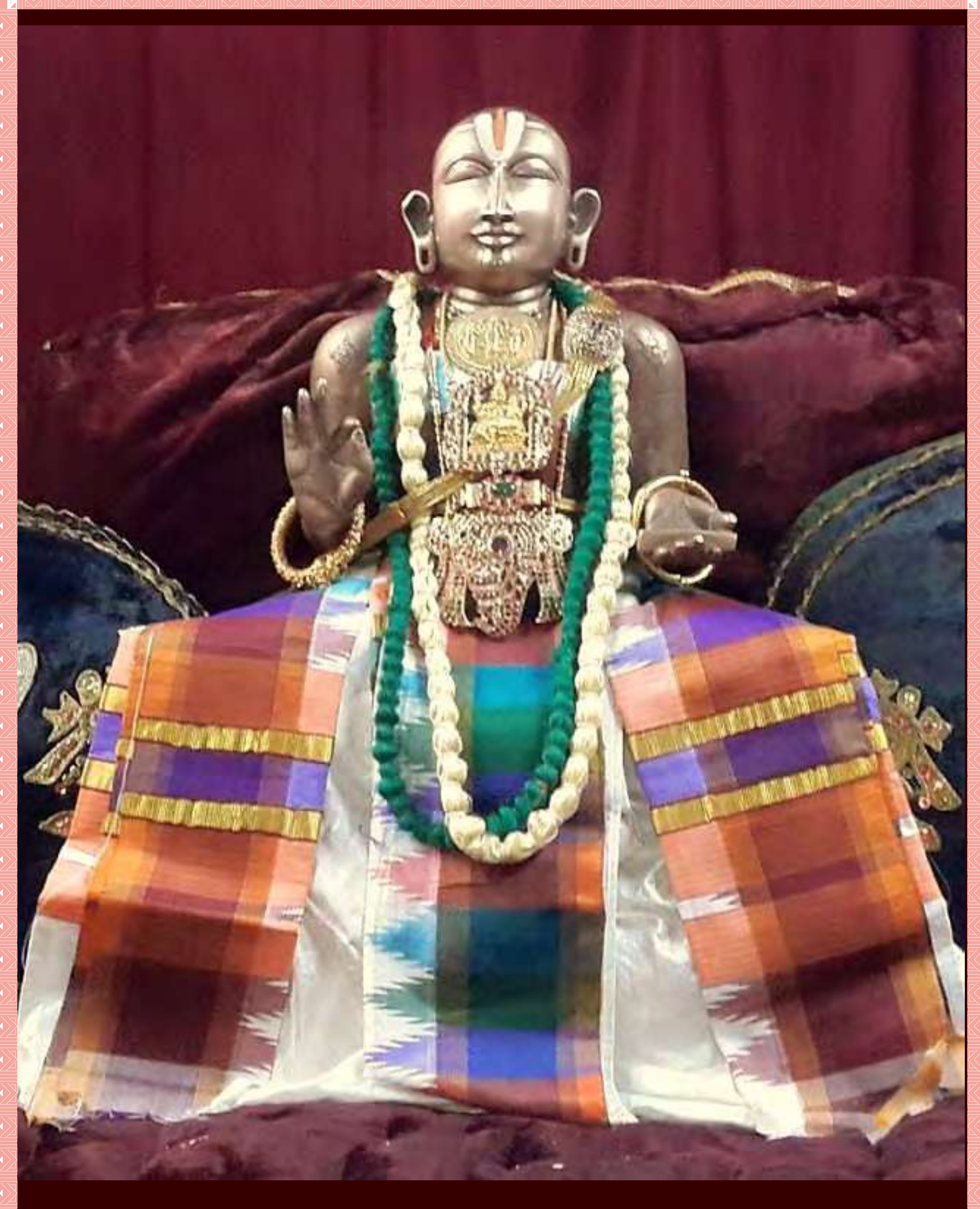
shrIrangarAjakaranamR^itashAkhikAbhyo

lakShmyA svahastakalitashravaNAvataMsam |

punnAgatallajamajasrasahasragIti –

sekotthadivyanijasaurabhamAma nAmaH ||

"During the evening time, Sri Ranganatha and Sri Ranganayaki Thayar are engaged in a sporting walk to Chandra pushkaraNi bank, where there is a golden tree. The Lord Himself plucks a flower from this tree and adrons Thayar's head with this flower. Thayar jokingly enquires of Perumal, what is so great about this tree that You stopped and plucked a flower with Your own hands and insisted on adorning My hair with this flower. Perumal responds this is no ordinary tree. It is the tree grown from the Azhvar Sri Suktis that have been transformed into this golden tree. This is the place where Sri Parasara Bhattar engaged in kalakshepam. Therefore, it is most befitting for Me to pluck the flower with My own hands and adorn Your hair with this flower." This is meant to illustrate the greatness of plucking flowers with one's own hands and adorning their hair. In a like manner, Daya Devi ensures that bountiful fruits and flowers are available to Her Children, who have surrendered to the Lord's feet so that they can pluck these with their own hands and partake of them. This is the mahopakaram rendered by Daya Devi. Who is it that enables the jivan to secure the grace of Daya Devi in this manner? It is undoubtedly Svami Desikan and SadAchAryAs in his line.



Svami Desikan and SadAchAryAs in his line, enable the jivan to secure the grace of Sri Daya Devi.

Therefore, the importance of Acharya sambandham is highlighted in this verse as the inner meaning.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachar Svamin:

This verse has a metaphorical implication. It stresses that anyone who appeals to KaruNa of Lord Srinivasa can secure his objective, lying flat on the ground in a posture of prostration to the Feet of Lord Srinivasa.

It must be remembered that those who bow to the Feet of Lord Srinivasa would rise to lofty heights, whereas arrogant egotistic ones who haughtily stand erect in contempt are instantaneously humbled.

Oh Daya Devi! You are verily the tree with roots in the Lord's feet! You have grown quite tall in rich verdant hue by virtue of the Lord's complexion. His potent eyeglances have helped You shoot out long rich branches. They bear delightful fruits, which are however bent low by weight. Those who seek fruits belonging to the three kinds - dharma, artha, and kAma, can pluck the fruits they want while lying low in prostration. Oh Daya Devi you please the seekers by conferring all that they ask for and more!"



Slokam 20

नयने वृषाचलेन्दोः तारा मैत्रीं दधानया करुणे ।

धृष्टस्त्वयैव जनिमान् अपवर्गम् अकृष्ट पच्यं अनुभवति ॥ २० ॥

nayane vR^iShAcalendoH tArA maitrIM dadhAnayA karuNe|

dhR^iShTastvayaiva janimAn apavargam akR^iShTa pacyaM anubhavati||20



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"In the previous verse the bountiful fruits that are conferred by Daya Devi were dwelt upon in some detail. Conferring the fruits of Dharma, Artha, and Kama are fairly routine fare for Daya Devi. However, Her role in granting Moksham is critically important. It must be borne in mind that Svami Desikan is a Paramaikantin par excellence. Therefore, he has absolutely no use for kAmyArtha phalan (fruits). Therefore, he turns his attention to the singular objective of uninterrupted kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple as a by-product of which Moksham is secured. This is something that is only possible for the Lord to confer. This is facilitated by Daya Devi. In this verse, the sambodhanam is karuNe! Lord Srinivasa is like the Moon that exudes gentleness at Vrushachala hill. The qualities of Chandra are elucidated next. There is a soothing feeling of gentle cool. Also, if the Chandran is pUrNam (full moon) the very sight brings a sense of calm even in the hottest of climates. One can joyously view this sight completely losing track of time. In a like manner the Chandran known as Lord Srinivasa brings great joy to all beholders. He is known as one who provides "AhlAdam" (extreme joy) to others. Andal has a unique anubhavam of this aspect of Lord Srinivasa in the Nacchiyar Tirumozhi pasuram

oLi vaNNam vaLai cintai ⋆ uRakkattODivai ellAm⋆

eLimaiyAl iTTennai⋆ IDazhiyap pOyinavAl⋆

kuLir aruvi vEnkaTattu⋆ en kOvintan kuNam pADi⋆

aLi atta mEkankAl! ⋆ Avi kAttiruppEnE

In this pasuram Andal enjoys the bhagyam of the clouds that hang over the Tiruvenkatam hill and laments the fact that she is not privy to the same anubhavam. What is the bhagyam of the clouds? The clouds hang low in close proximity with



the Tiruvenkatam hill and thus develop a close contact with Lord Srinivasa. Those clouds are extremely cool and offer a sense of calm singing the praise of Govinda. In a like manner a mere darshan of Lord Srinivasa rids one of all worries and bestows a sense of calm reassurance. The amount of time spent in front of Srinivasa is not of importance. Even a split second darsan relieves one of all the accumulated samsaric baggage. One may go to have a darsan of Lord Srinivasa with the objective of requesting a large list of blessings. However, the mere sight of Lord Srinivasa brings great joy making one forget the entire list of prayers. Instead, one returns with the feeling, "I am a dAsa bhUta (humble servant) of Lord Srinivasa. The entire burden of protecting me has been submitted to His feet. He knows what is best for me and thus will confer the things I need."

vR^iShAcalendoH - Svami Desikan uses the analogy to Chandran most skillfully in this instance. Chandran is subject to waxing and waning. The full moon is visible only once a month. However, the Chandran on top of the Vrushachala hill (Lord Srinivasa) is constant in His offering the comforting, soothing, calming, and

cooling darsanam. There are numerous differences between Chandran and Lord Srinivasa. Svami Desikan enjoys this in the contex of Sri Bhashyakar in the Yatiraja saptati salutation "yatirAjacandramuparAgadUragam" in the sense that the Chandran known as Yatirajar is not subject to any eclipses by Rahu and Ketu, thus shining forth gently. In a like manner the Chandran on top of the Vrushachala is not suject to any eclipses or diminishing of any kind. He is nityodita in that He is constantly gracing all His seekers. The Lord of such magnificence is sought after by all. Even in the present time it is customary practice in some homes where when a problem arises, to wrap up coins in a yellow cloth with the prayer that the coins will be submitted to the Hundi of Lord Srinivasa in Tirumalai. We have submitted our worry to Lord Srinivasa residing on top of the Tiruvenkatam hill to ensure our welfare. Therefore, the problem is as good as solved. Therefore, it must be understood that the analogy between Lord Srinivasa and Chandran was merely used as an example to illustrate the soothing calm, coolness, and joy that comes about from beholding him. However, Lord Srinivasa offers everything that Chandran does and much more.

Next, Svami Desikan dwells upon the fact that Daya Devi resides in the eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa- vR^iShAcalendoH nayane is the usage depicting this fact. Next the meaning of the salutation tArA maItrIm is elaborated upon. It is quite common that upon beholding some people a natural sense of attachment and emotion is evoked. One would like to cultivate the association with them and be of service to them. This is known as tArA maItrIm. This is the magic brought about by Daya Devi. A seeker who comes to Lord Srinivasa may make Him wonder "what has this person done to receive My grace?" However, Daya Devi ensures that no such questions arise, and the seeker is instantly graced by Lord Srinivasa. This is known as tArA maItrIm. In the Kishkinda khANDam of SrImad RAmAyana, Sugriva upon beholding Rama and Lakshmana from the Rishyamukha hill wonders if these majestically armed warriors were sent by Vali to destroy him. However, Hanuman assured him that "Merely looking at their faces indicates that they are not in any way ill-intended towards you." "rupameva shItam mahimAnam vyachaste" is the Vedam salutation illustrating this fact. Hanuman further elaborates prabhayA parvatendrosau yuvayoH avabhAsati in glorifying Rama and Lakshmana. The meaning is that the entire hill acquires effulgence due to your radiance. Hanuman further glorifies Rama and Lakshmana "yadrucayaiva sampratou candra suryo vasundharam." In seeing you both it appears as if the Sun and Moon have simultaneously descended on the earth. This instant bonding upon beholding someone is known as tara maItrIm.



Daya Devi ensures that all seekers coming to Lord Srinivasa gain an instantaneous evocative, unquestioning grace from the Lord.

Daya Devi in a like manner ensures that all seekers coming to Lord Srinivasa gain an instantaneous evocative, unquestioning grace from the Lord. The inner meaning is that those who receive the kataksham of Lord Srinivasa through the grace of Daya Devi are the fortunate ones.

Another interpretation of this verse is that Daya Devi ensures that Lord Srinivasa's kataksham falls upon all beings without discrimination in the manner of tara maItrIm. The next question that arises is should this kataksham be gained at birth or even when in garbha vasam. This is answered through the Mahabharatam salutation "jAyamanam hi puruSham yam pashyet madhusUdhanaH sAtvikaH sa tu vij~neyaH sa vai mokShArtha cintakaH" Each being at birth begets katakshams from various devatas. Their lives will be accordingly dictated. One who has Madhusudhana kataksham develops Satvika gunam and desires moksham. Azhvar offers mangalasasanam to this through the salutation tiruvuDayAr. What then about those who receive the kataksham of devatas like Brahma and Rudra? This is answered through the salutation "pashyatenam jAyamanam brahma rudro tava punaH rajasA tamasA cAsya manasAm samabhiplutam" If one gets the kataksham of Brahma or Rudra, their minds are subject to Rajas and Tamas and filled with thoughts about enriching themselves at the expense of others. They will never have an inclination for Moksham. Therefore, one who has performed Bharasamarpanam at the feet of a Sadacharya undoubtedly has the kataksham of Madhusudhana. There are six factors essential for begetting sadacharya sambandham. Ishavarasya sauhArdam, yadR^icCa sukR^itam tatha viShNoH kaTAkSham, adveSham, abhimukhyam ca sAtvikaiH sambhAShaNam shaDaitAni AcArya prApti hetavaH

We have taken numerous births. In all of these births it has never occurred to us that we must acquire Acharya Sambandham, learn sadvishayam, and perform Bharanyasam. This has only fructified in this birth. What is the reason for this? It is entirely the compassionate Acharya Kataksham. There has to be a reason for the Acharya Kataksham. This is accounted for through the salutation Ishvarasya souhardham - Emperuman needs to think in this birth this jivan needs to acquire Acharya kataksham. yadR^cCa sukR^itam comes next-as a good deed that is done through sheer accident without any thought of accruing benefit. For example if one visits Kanchipuram for some purpose and by sheer accident happens to witness the Garuda Sevai. Thiru thEr happens next and one by sheer accident is able to get this sevai, it qualifies as yadR^cCika sukR^itam. The darsanam of the Lord on the thEr is capable of ridding one of Brahma hatthi dosham. ViShNoH kaTAkSham - the glances of Vishnu. adveSham - no feeling of enmity towards the Lord. sAtvika sambhashaNam comes next. Namely engaging in conversations with satvikas, who

are learned about the scriptures. manasa dhyAyet is the salutation that denotes the fact that a conversation with the learned ones/Acharyas destroys all consequences of unintended sins. With these six factors one is able to gain Acharya kataksham. In a like manner only one who has the kataksham of Emperuman through the grace of Daya Devi at birth alone will be inclined towards moksham. What then is the benefit conferred? This is answered through the salutation dhR^iShTastvayaiva janimAn apavargam akR^iShTa pacyaM anubhavati.

In the next verse Lord Srinivasa will be glorified as a farmer harvesting a bumper crop. Before that Svami Desikan lays the groundwork for the kind of crop. Needless to say, there are numerous types of crop. Some grow by sheer accident of someone scattering a few seeds. However, when this grows into a full-blown tree yielding fruit with no effort on anyone's part it is commendable. Svami Desikan declares here that that the grace of Daya Devi is such that one attains moksham akin to the tree bearing fruit with no effort at all. A few questions arise in this context. How is it that Daya Devi makes it possible to attain the ultimate benefit of Moksham effortlessly? The inner meaning is that the grace of Daya Devi causes one to seek a Sadacharya and perform Bharanyasam as a consequence of which moksham is attained effortlessly. Daya Devi ensures that all things are in place for this act. It is most definitely not intended to mean that no action is called for on the part of the individual.

Summarizing this set of 10 verses, it is important to note that among all the Kalyana Gunams, Daya Devi reigns supreme. It is only on account of association with Daya Devi do the other gunams become gunams. All of Emperuman's kAryams such as pralayam, srushti, and sthiti are carried out due to Daya Devi. Daya Devi due to Her grace facilitates the offering of low hanging fruit - everything and more that one wishes for, making it possible for seekers to pluck these on their own from the tree known as Lord Srinivasa. The upakaram of Daya Devi towards baddha jivans is documented in this set of ten verses. In the next set of ten verses, the focus shifts to Daya Devi's upakaram for Emperuman. Emperuman who resides in Sri Vaikuntam gave up this abode to take root at the top of the Tiruvenkatam Hill. Why so? It is only to bring out the prominence of Daya Devi in redeeming baddha jivans by excusing or overlooking their sins. If He had resided eternally in Sri Vaikuntam there is no scope for showcasing the role of Daya Devi in the context of uplifting errant jivans. mAyAvi paramAnandam tyaktvA vaikuNTham uttamam, svAmi puShkaraNI tIre ramayA sahamodate. Bhagavan is denoted as MAyAvi who forsakes the uttamam (foremost) abode and takes residence on the banks of SvAmi

PuShkaraNi along with Sri MahAlakShmi and is even more blissful than He is in His eternal abode.

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachar Svami

"Oh Daya Devi! The Lord of Tirumalai casts the lovely glance of His eyes on a sentient at birth. It is a significant glance. You cause this I would say. When the sentient has this privilege, he has no ordeal to pass through. He is a Krita-Kritya (one who has done what needs to be done) in our parlance. He is destined to enjoy the fruits of Moksha as a landowner reaps the crop yield in full measure, without any strain for the fruit.

1. Jaayamana Kataksham is a significant concept. The famous quotation from the scripture declares that whomever Lord Madhusudhana blesses at his birth moment will set his heart on Moksham. This verse glorifies Daya Devi. She casts Her glance and ensures that this particular being goes to Moksha in the normal course-especially without having to strain himself for the benefit of the fruit.

2. Questions such as "should he not strive by Bhakti or Prapatti?" and "How can he gain Moksham without conscientious effort on his part?" are irrelevant here.

3. Daya Devi takes care of him!"





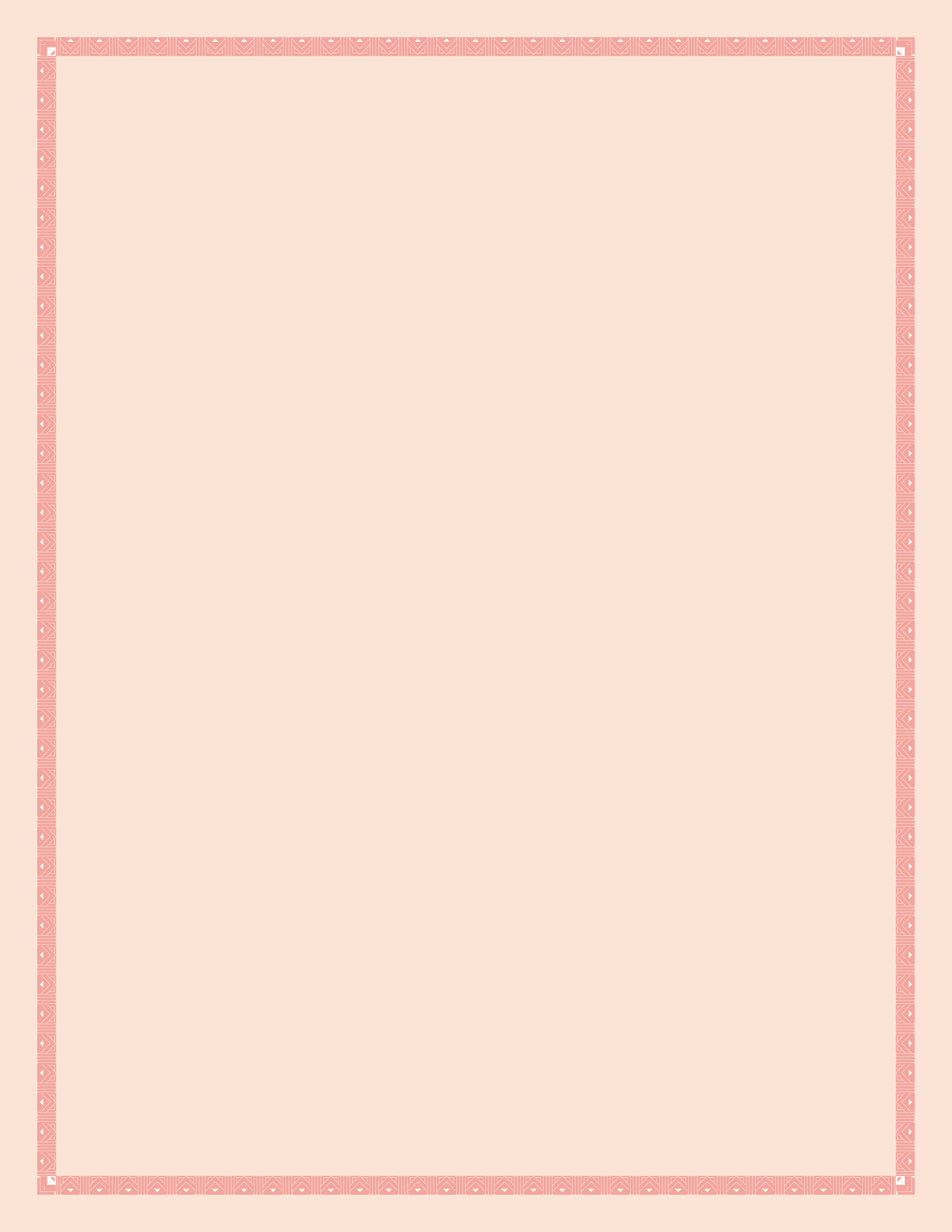

SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 21 – 30)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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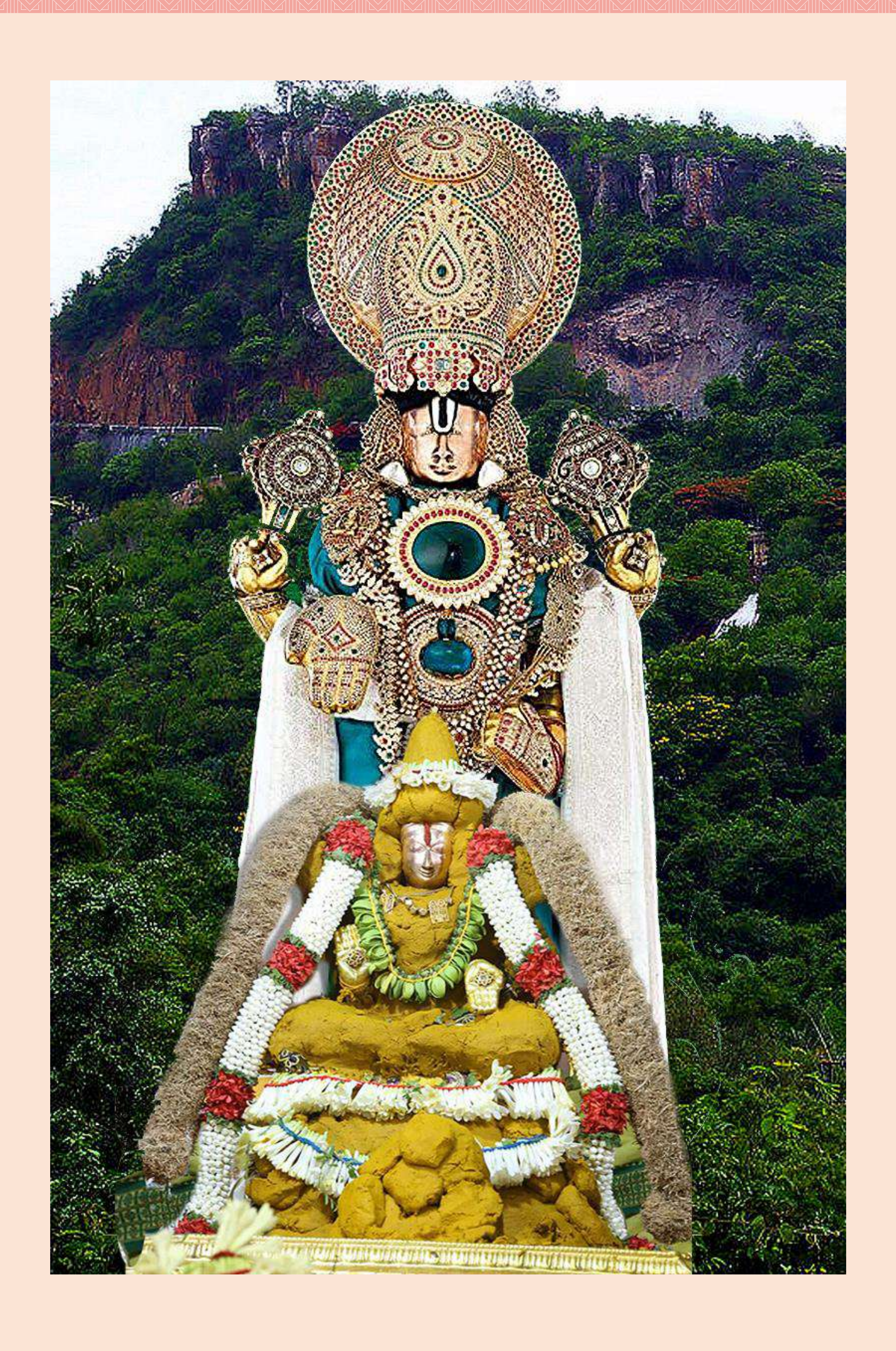
SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



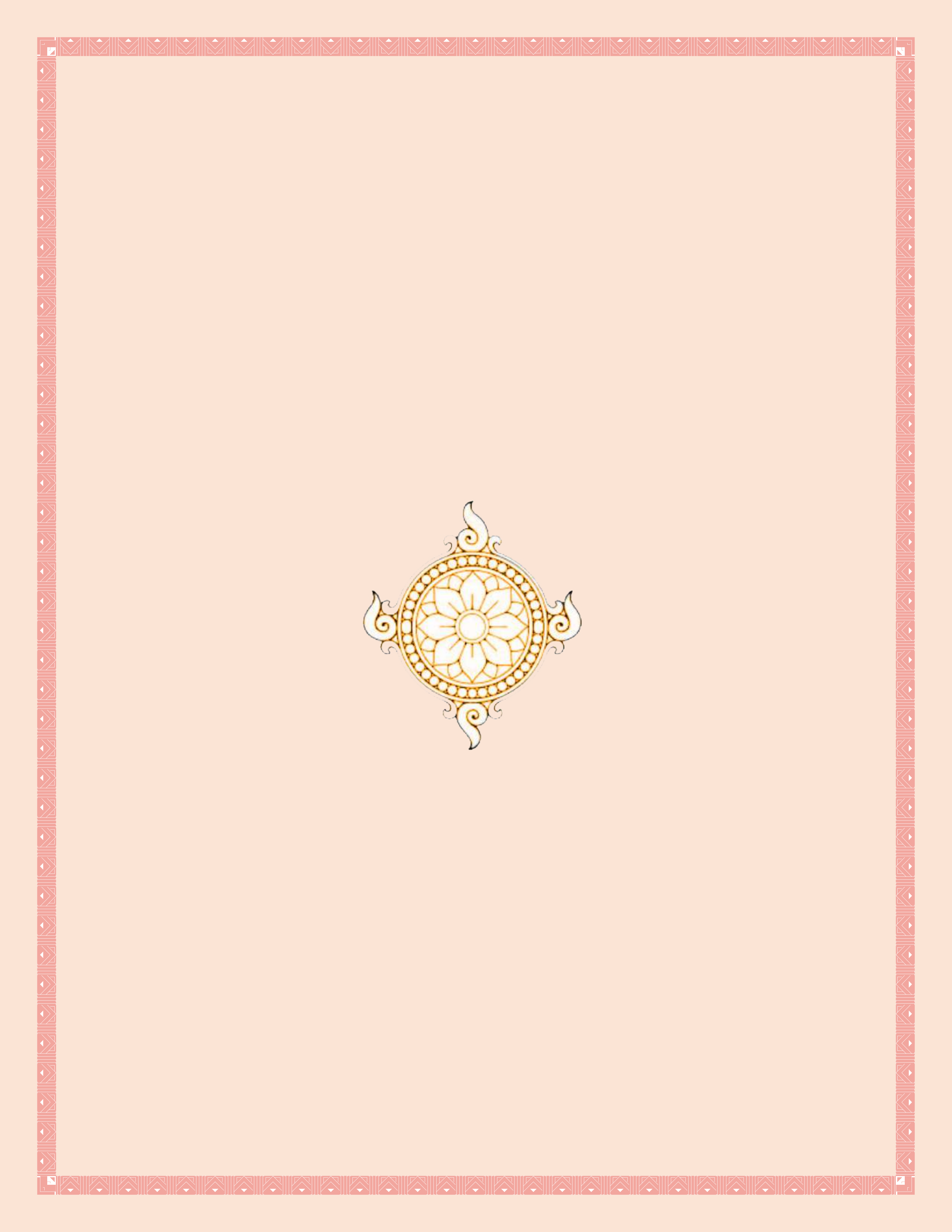


SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||



Slokam 21

समयोपनतैस्तव प्रवाहैः अनुकम्पे कृत सप्लवा धरित्री ।

शरणागत सस्य मालिनीय वृषशैलेश कृषीवलं धिनोति ॥ २१ ॥

samayopanataistava pravAhaiH anukampe kR^ita saMplavA dharitrI|

sharaNAgata sasya mAlinIyaM vR^iShashailesha kR^iShIvalaM dhinoti||21



We first quote the anubhavam of U.Ve. Sri. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Now Lord Srinivasa is described in this verse as a farmer. Daya Devi brings great delight to this farmer. What excites a farmer? Timely arrival of rains, not in excess nor in drought. Just the right amount of rain to nourish the crop. Andal describes this rainfall in the Tiruppavai salutation as "tInginri nADellAm tingal mummAri peitu". This rainfall should be just the right amount. It should not flood the fields where the crops grow. Nor should the rainfall be insufficient that the crops thirst for more. This is best visualized in terms of the dense crop growth at Tirukudantai Divya Desam, where the full-grown crops are bent in the form of a Chamara (fan offering) to the Lord Aravamudan. This is the delight that Daya Devi brings to Lord Srinivasa. The sambodhanam in this verse is anukampe! Oh Daya Devi, what is it that you do which brings such delight to Lord Srinivasa? samayopanataistava pravAhaiH is the salutation which glorifies this. Arriving in a timely manner is the import. This has two interpretations (1) devamAtrukam - mAnam pArta bhUmi (2) nadImAtrukam - that which is nourished by the river waters. The water from the river in ancient times was ever present and thus always enabled the flourishing of crops. In this context, Daya Devi is referred to as the one who confers water in an as needed manner for the crops much in the same manner as nadImatrukam. Here the Daya Devi's Daya itself is described as a pravAham (torrential flow). Here it must be borne in mind that Lord Srinivasa functions as the jiva nadi. Daya Devi serves as the nourishing water for this river. Since the Lord is a jIva nadi, which inherently bears water, i.e., Lord Srinivasa inherently possesses the Daya Gunam, what is the need for the salutation samayopanataistava pravAhaiH? Svami Desikan answers this skillfully by noting that a small task undertaken by Daya Devi results in a huge benefit. It is the duty of the farmer to use the ever-available water in suitable manner for crop growth. In a like manner, even though Lord Srinivasa is inherently endowed with the Daya quality, an effort (yadR^icCha

sukR^itam) is required to invoke the flow. Daya Devi is instrumental in making this yadR^icCha sukR^itam for a SaraNagata.



There is another dR^iShTAntam (perspective) for yadR^icCha sukR^itam. Let’s say a fisherman sets out to catch fish. When he sets out to the ocean there is a solar eclipse taking place. While engaged in catching fish during the grahaNam (eclipse) the fisherman drops his net. The fisherman descends into the ocean to retrieve his net. At that moment, it becomes a major puNya kAlam because, inadvertently, the fisherman gets Samudra snAnam during the time of the eclipse in a totally unplanned manner. This is known as yadR^icCha sukR^itam. The one who causes this is verily Daya Devi. Once the yadR^icCha sukR^itam begins to yield fruit, Bhagavad anugraham follows as a natural consequence. This can be through Acharya sambandham on account of which Acharyas perform Bharanyasam for the supplicant and ensure the well-being of the atma. This anugraham of Daya Devi is akin to the timely arrival of rainfall. Another interpretation is also in order. Daya Devi ensures the incarnation of Acharyas such as Nathamuni, Yamuna Muni, and

Sri Bhashyakarar. As a consequence of their incarnation, they establish that for the well-being of the entire universe, there is no path greater than that of unconditional total surrender at the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa and ensure that a large number of people adopt the means of sharaNAgati. In this verse Daya Devi is described as the pravAham and the people who perform sharaNAgati are described as the crops. These sharaNAgatAs have a greatness. Specifically, Daya Devi ensures that there is a bumper crop of sharaNAgatAs, which greatly pleases Lord Srinivasa. It may then be asked what is the greatness of the sharaNAgatAs? This is described in the salutation "satkarmaniyatA shuddhAH sankhya yoga vidhastathA nArhanti charaNastasya kalAmkoTitAmImapi" Those who are engaged in constant practice of yogam do not even equal one part in a million of a sharaNAgata. Therefore, sharaNAgatAs acquire a unique greatness. Lord Srinivasa is delighted to see this bumper crop of sharaNAgatAs and wonders "Behold the large number of sharaNAgatAs! It is solely for this purpose that I left My abode in Srivaikuntam and took residence here. The sojourn is well worth the effort." In this context, Daya Devi enables the Lord to accomplish the objective for which He took root in the Venkatam hill." KaDal vaNNan bUtankaL maNmEl maliya puganzhntu - Bhagavatas who exude extreme bhakti for the Lord see Him in all animate and inanimate objects. In a like manner, when Lord Srinivasa beholds the large number of sharaNAgatAs a unique source of delight takes over and the Lord is extremely happy. kaNDOm kaNDOm kaNNukku iniyana kaNDOm is the Azhvar mangalasasanam wherein the Azhvar regrets having incarnated in kaliyugam rather than tretha yugam or krita yugam. However, we need not fear. If one has the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa, even though one is born in kaliyugam it will be as if he was born in Krita yugam. For those engaged in constant anubhavam of the Lord's glories even if they are in kali yugam it is like being in krita yugam. For those born in Krita yugam, bereft of the thoughts of the Lord, it is verily like being in kali yugam. If one examines one's state prior to performance of sharaNAgati, it is in the manner of "asameva saha bhavati" Even though he is endowed with everything he has nothing. However, upon performance of sharaNagati, "santamenam tathaH vidhu iti" However upon performance of sharaNAgati, he becomes worthy in that he possesses everything. This is the greatness of sharaNAgatAs. kR^ita saMplavA dharitrI is the salutation that glorifies the role of Daya Devi in process. She provides timely water by way of creating yadR^icChika puNyam for the sharaNAgata. Furthermore, She sends forth sadAchAryAs, on account of whose sambandham, the sharaNAgata gets elevated through BharanyAsam. Not only that a bumper crop of such sharaNAgatAs greatly gladdens the heart of Lord Srinivasa.



kR^ita saMplavA dharitrI

If there is a dense growth of crop a farmer normally puts down a paran (a loft) at an elevation and takes a seat to behold this sight and guard it from other animals, birds and pests. In a like manner Lord Srinivasa who stands on top of the Venkatam hill is beholding the large number of sharaNAgatAs. He is extremely gladdened by this sight and wonders "How is it that there are so many sharaNAgatAs? The purpose for which I came to the Venkatam Hill has been served" Who is it that is responsible for this task? It is undoubtedly Daya Devi. BhUmi Devi pleases Lord Srinivasa. However, this too is on account of Daya Devi only. A mother lovingly dotes on her child and provides milk to the child. The father on account of his love for the child is seeking out the mother forgetful of his duties. In a like manner, Lord Srinivasa beholds Bhumi Devi who has yielded these many sharaNagatas and is lost in admiration forgetful of the fact that he needs to return to Sri Vaikuntam. This is the fundamental import of this slokam. A similar anubhavam can be found in the Paduka Sahasram, wherein Svami Desikan glorifies the various upakArams rendered by Paduka Devi. Here it is important to note that regular crops may be bountiful, or they may fail causing distress to the farmer. However, the farmer known as Lord Srinivasa is always kept happy due to the bumper crop of sharaNAgatAs resulting from the upakaram of Daya Devi. In the next verse, Svami Desikan states that the Divyamangala Vigraham of Lord Srinivasa that provides darshanam to all seekers is verily the result of Daya Devi's upakaram.

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You drench the earth with copious showers at regular intervals. The fields are rich in water; the crops are rich; the paddy grains give an imagery of rows and rows on Mother Earth. They figuratively denote rows and rows of privileged Prapannas. The Lord positioning himself in a high-altitude watchtower oversees the Prapanna products, lest they should suffer poaching from aliens. The Lord is proud, these Prapannas are self-realized souls. Mother Earth is proud. The Lord would hover so to say around this Earth with a garlands of crop grains representing a rich galaxy of Prapannas.

1. Rain (of Krupa) shower in time, at regular intervals. This is a proverbial saying "samaya upanata", here may also imply spiritual school and its shower of Daya-rains. Commentators proudly acknowledge the role of Svami Alavandar and Svami Bhashyakarar in propagating the Prapatti path.

2. Mere overviewing of this array of paddy crops gladdens the heart of Lord Srinivasa. All these souls will provide him delicious company in His Abode."

Slokam 22

कलशोदधि संपदो भवत्याः करुणे सन्मति मन्थ संस्कृतायाः ।

अमृतांशमवैमि दिव्य देहं मृत सञ्जीवनमञ्जनाचलेन्दोः ॥ २२ ॥

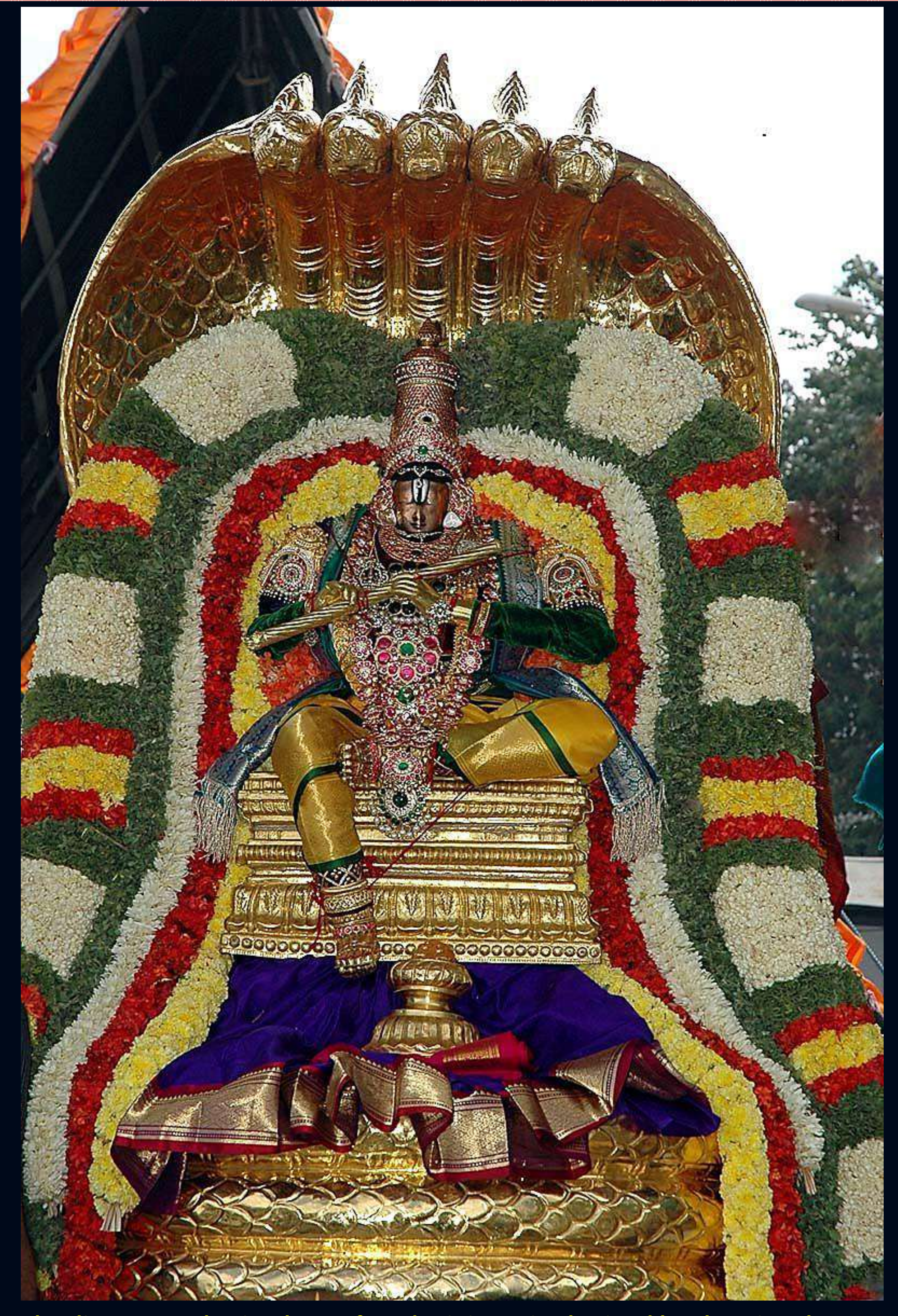
kalashodadhi saMpado bhavatyAH karuNe sanmati mantha saMskR^itAyAH|

amR^itAMshamavaimi divya deham mR^ita sa~njIvanam a~njanAchalendoH||22



There is an upamanam and upameyam in this verse. Srinivasa Daya is verily an ocean akin to the milky ocean. Churning of the milky ocean resulted in the avataram of Mahalakshmi. Not only that, amrutam too was obtained as a result of the churning. In a like manner, the upamanam and upameyam here is the Daya Sagaram. kalashodadhi sampad, namely the equivalence between the Daya Sagaram and the milky ocean is appropriate because all the elevated characteristics found in the milky ocean are also found in abundant measure in the Daya Sagaram. The milky ocean has a majesty (gambhiryam). In a like manner, the Daya ocean too has the same majesty. Next comes madhuryam - a softness or gentleness that is not a characteristic of any ocean except the Milky Ocean. The Daya ocean too is replete with this characteristic. The Milky Ocean is fit for enjoyment. Likewise, the Daya Sagaram is also fit for enjoyment by all beings.

Next comes akshaubhya -namely the impossibility to measure the depth of the milky ocean. Similarly, it is impossible to measure the depth of the Daya ocean. Therefore, the salutation kalashodadhi sampad denotes the upameyam of the Daya ocean. The milky ocean needs to be churned. In a like fashion, the Daya ocean too requires churning. For churning the milky ocean, the manthara mountain functioned as the churning rod. Here, for the Daya ocean, Bhagavad-sankalpam plays a similar role. sanmati mantha saMskR^itAyAH is the salutation which describes the act of churning. One endowed with sadbuddhi/sanmathi on account of Bhagavad anugraham engages in the act of churning the Daya ocean. Lord Srinivasa inherently possesses the Daya guNam. However, He needs to perform sankalpam that “this jivan needs to be blessed at this time in this manner” One undergoing extreme difficulties may wonder “Why am I struggling thus? Does the Lord not have any mercy on me?” Such reasoning is flawed since Emperuman is aware of the appropriate time to bestow His grace on each jivan



The divyamangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa is obtained by churning the ocean known as Daya Devi

In a slokam in Srimad Rahasya trayasaram, Svami Desikan states that one may long for arogyam and aishvaryam. If one is endowed with a full span of life of 120 years, that life will be fulfilling only if all people associated with that person are similarly long lived. On the other hand, if all loved ones are lost prior to the full lifespan, it only creates sorrow and provides no happiness. In a like manner, the more one accrues wealth one only begets more enemies. However, if Emperuman does not bless us with these things the tendency is to think that “the Lord has not graced me.” However, it is not so. The all-knowing Lord knows the appropriate time to shower His grace. How does this come about? It is entirely due to Bhagavad-Sankalpam. This is literally the churning rod for the Daya Ocean. What results from this churning? Amrutam. This Amrutam functions as the sanjIvanam - namely that which revives the dead/comatose state. In the present time devices such as ventilators prolong the life of those who are on the throes of death. This could be termed as jIvanam, namely prolonging life. However, sanjIvanam denotes making the person who was in a comatose state even stronger than he was prior to the comatose state. This is denoted by the salutation mR^ita sa~njIvanam a~njanAchalendoH. The reference is to the divya deham of Lord Srinivasa, who resides on top of the Anjanagiri hill. The inner meaning is that aprAkruta divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa that is enjoyed and saluted by all comes about as a result of Daya Devi. It is important to note the difference between the churning of the milky ocean and the churning of the Daya ocean. In the former instance, the result was Amrutam. In the latter case, the Daya Ocean ensured a churning of herself by the rod known as Bhagavad Sankalpam to yield the sanJivanam of the aprAkruta divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa. The Lord undertook the churning of the milky ocean in order to gain the hand of Mahalakshmi. However, Daya Devi ensured the churning of herself! yadarthamambodhiH amanthya bandhi cha is the salutation employed by Svami Alavandar to denote the Lord’s churning of the milky ocean. malaiyAl kaDalai aDaitthavan enthai pirAn is the mangalasasanam of Tirumangai Azhwar to denote the building of the bridge across the ocean. In both instances, the churning of the ocean as well as the construction of the bridge were entirely for the purpose of getting untied with Thayar. Here Daya Devi enables the churning of Herself to yield the divine vigraham of Lord Srinivasa for our enjoyment. The important message here is the sesha-seshi bhavam. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi by giving us this dhivya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa enables those who are ignorant of Bhagavan’s svarupam (and therefore are in the mruta/comatose state) to gain knowledge of His svarupam and the eternal subservience of the jIvan to Bhagavan. This is the mahopakaram rendered

by Daya Devi in transforming the mruta jivan into sanjIvanam. In the atimAnusha stavam KurathAzhvar exclaims

sanjIvayannapi mrutam sutamuttarAyAH

sAndIpaneshciramrutam sutamAnayan ca|

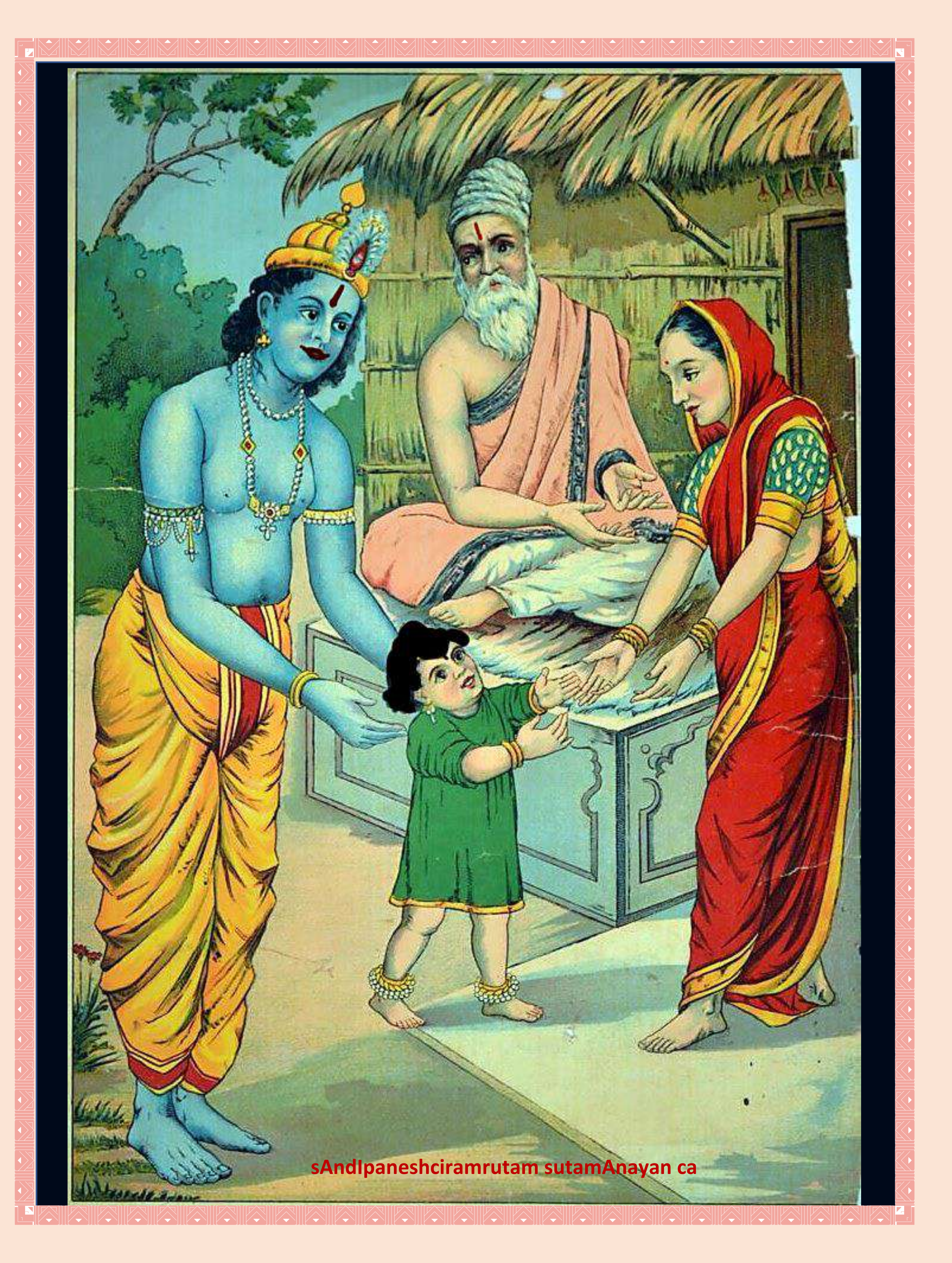
dhAmno nijAd dvijasutAn punarAnayan vA

svAmAva tAṃ tanumaho ! kathamAnayastvam ||

Lord Krishna has performed the unusual task of reviving three dead children. The foremost among them was for Uttara against who Ashvathama invoked the Apandava astra. This reduced to a lump of burnt flesh the child that was in the womb of Uttara. At that moment of great sadness, when everyone was lamenting the loss of all progeny for the Pandavas, Lord Krishna states that if a true Brahmachari touches this lump of flesh it will be transformed into a healthy baby. Upon hearing this everyone backed away. However, Lord Krishna took up the task of restoring the child's life by touching it and uttering the verse "yadi me brahmacaryam syAt satyam ca vacanam mama l AvyAhatam mamaishvaryam tena jIvatu bAlakah" (If my Brahmacharya was spotless, if I am known for the truth, if my aishwaryam has no destruction may this child survive). Lord Krishna specifically, blessed the lump of flesh with the touch of his Lotus feet. pAdena kamalAbhena brahmarudrArchitena cha| pasparsha puNDarIkAkSha ApAdatalamastakam is the salutation that describes this act. The Lotus feet of Lord Krishna, which is worshipped by Brahma and Rudra, He who is known as Pundarikaksha (lotus-eyed one), graced the lump of flesh by its touch. This transformed the lump of flesh into a beautiful princely child.

Another instance of mruta sanjivanam during the Krishna avataram was the revival of the son of His guru Sandipani captured in the salutation "*sAndIpaneshciramrutam sutamAnayan ca*". Although Lord Krishna was the omniscient all-knowing one, He recognized that shastras need to be gained from a guru in the traditional manner. Therefore, He undertook gurukula vasam in the hermitage of sage Sandipani. Upon completion of His studies He enquires from His Guru "what needs to be submitted as guru dakshina". To this sage Sandipani replies, I do not need anything. However, Lord Krishna insisted on giving the Guru Dakshina. At that moment sage Sandipani mentioned "I do not need anything. Please ask my wife if she needs anything. If you can please give her what she needs." Lord Krishna enquires of her what she needs. She too full of vairagyam replies that she needs nothing. Upon insisting, she opened up to Lord Krishna and

revealed that she had a son who was playing on the ocean shore and was swept up by the current and drowned. Thus, she was suffering from putra shokam for a long time. She asked Lord Krishna if it was possible to restore her son to her. Lord Krishna readily agreed and mA tavattOn puttiran pOi maRi kaDal vAi mANDAnai Oduvitta takkaNaiyA uruvuruvE koDuttAn is the Azhwar pasuram that glorifies this deed of Lord Krishna. This is another instance of mrutha sanjIvanam performed by Lord Krishna. The third instance of Lord Krishna performing mrutha sanjIvanam is described in the salutation "*sAndIpaneshciramrutam sutamAnayan ca|dhAmno nijAd dvijasutAn punarAnayan vA*." A Brahmin approached Lord Krishna with the submission. "My wife has been conceiving children. However, the moment they are born they disappear. This is extremely puzzling. She is pregnant now and I cannot bear to lose another child. Please help me." Arjuna who was at Krishna's side at that time suggested "Oh Krishna! You are engaged in the performance of a yajna. Therefore, I shall take care of this Brahmin's request. You need not interrupt your yajna" Accordingly Arjuna proceeded with the Brahmin to his abode and fortified the place with his arrows such that it was airtight. However, once again the child that was born disappeared in a jiffy. The Brahmin drags Arjuna to Krishna's presence and appeals "Oh Krishna! I came to you seeking help and you sent this Arjuna to safeguard my child. However, this was of no avail. The child disappeared at birth once again. Is this the result of my submission to you?" Lord Krishna immediately stopped his yajna and proceeded to Sri Vaikuntam and retrieved the four children of the Brahmin. The Azhwar pasuram that glorifies this act is "suDaroLiyAi ninRa…. vaithikan pillayE … koNDu koDutthavan" These three instances are glorified in a single slokam by Sri KurathAzhwan. Each of these instances has a unique loftiness. In the case of rescuing Uttara's child, it was the sparsham (contact) with the Lord's Lotus Feet that transformed the burnt lump of flesh into a beautiful prince. In the second instance of restoring SandIpani's son, the Lord had not seen the child. He only knew that the child disappeared while playing near the ocean. Therefore, he proceeded to the ocean front to bring back the child. In the final instance, the location of the children was unknown. However, Lord Krishna discerningly proceeded to Sri Vaikuntam and retrieved the children for the Brahmin. Therefore, Lord Krishna is fittingly hailed as mrutha sanjIvanan. Returning to Lord Srinivasa, He is also mrutha sanjIvanan due to the fact that he restores people in a comatose state (those bereft of jnAnam of jIvAtma svarUpam and paramAtma svarUpam), to a fully fit state by endowing them with the knowledge that He is their supporter, controller, and master and that they are dAsabhUtas whose existence and activities are solely for his pleasure. This


sAndIpaneshciramrutam sutamAnayan ca

divyamangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa is obtained by churning the ocean known as Daya Devi and is therefore verily the amrutam that results from the churning. There is one point of difference. The amrutam from churning the milky ocean was meant exclusively for the devas. However, the amrutam of Lord Srinivasa is meant for all as glorified by Svami Desikan in the salutation "vinnavaram mannavarum virumbum verpu" The inner meaning is that the arrival of Acharyas such as Svami BhAshyakArar and Svami Desikan resulted in ignorant beings becoming aware of their svArUpam and the svarUpam of Lord Srinivasa and resort to Him as their sole refuge. This anugraham is lasting and permanent.

Next we quote the anubhavam of U.Ve. Sri Shaili Patrachariar Svamin. "We have heard of the Puranic episode in which the milk-ocean was churned at the instance of the Lord; the churner was a massive mountain, Manthara. The yields consisted essentially of the nectar of immortality , Mahalakshmi, and many others.

We have now to consider a parallel theme. The Daya is an ocean; churning is done by the will of the Lord (sankalpa). The crop is the Divine Form, Srinivasan, an *idol sui generis*, that is a cool Chandra-like force that can rejuvenate humans who worship him.

1. The term "San-mati" has been interpreted as the Lord's super-will that is often referred to as Bhagavad-sankalpa.

2. Why not interpret it as the combined wish of great Sadhus? What they wish and long for can materialize as a concrete material. They prayed that the great Daya-which is a vast ocean as vast as the milky ocean should yield a solid, easily palpable (to all humans) material! Then we had the Lord's form as Sri Venkatesa in the Hill

3. Svami Desikan refers to his materializing the content of Brahma Sutras-Sri Bhashya into beautiful verses. Then he mentions verse 2 of AdhikaraNa sArAvaLi that he versified the concepts by employing a sharpened intellect, not minding what jealous critics would say by way of dissecting analysis. Indeed that Daya-Ocean has on churning yielded the divya mangala vigraha of Lord Venkatesa is sweet to contemplate on. How many billions of mortals worship the Lord's form, rejoice and benefit every day!

4. Finally, could it not take a new incarnation as Svami Desikan and do all the service to humanity, and is being given out by great seers over centuries! One has to extend one's imagination for this purpose!"

Slokam 23

जलधेरिव शीतता दये त्वं वृषशैलाधिपतेः स्वभाव भूता ।

प्रलयारभटी नटीं तदीक्षां प्रसभं ग्राहयसि प्रसत्ति लास्यम् ॥ २३ ॥

jaladheriva shItatA daye tvaM vR^iShashailAdhipateH svabhAva bhUtaa|

pralayArabhaTI naTIM tadIkShAM prasabhaM grAhayasi prasatti lAsyam||23



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "kalashodadhi saMpad from the previous verse refers to Perumal gaining fame on account of His association with Thayar as evidenced by the salutation of Svami Nammazhvar in the "akalakillEn irayum enRu alarmElmangai urai mArba" denoting the eternal association between Perumal and Thayar. Svami Desikan follows the lead of the Azhvar in performing mangalasasanam to Lord Srinivasa, who is always associated with Sri. Perumal is omnipresent. In all places that He exists, He is replete with Daya gunam. This then gives rise to the question, why is Daya Satakam rendered for Lord Srinivasa? It must be understood that the tribute is meant for the place where the Daya Gunam is abundantly on display. In this instance it is at Tiruvenkatam alone and hence the Daya Satakam is dedicated to Him. The Lord takes on forms such as Param, Vyuham, Vibhavam, Hardam, and Archa. Param form is what can be seen in Sri Vaikuntam. He is not required to do much for the Nitya Suris or the mukta jivans that arrive here. Therefore, there is not much reason to display the Daya gunam. Daya gunam is meant to help suffering jivans and relieve them from their plight. MuktAnubhUti, which is being enjoyed by the liberated ones requires no act of Daya on the part of the Lord. Similarly, in the vibhava avatarams of Rama, Krishna, and Nrusimha, He has rid a few people of their suffering and redeemed them. For example, the incarnation of Nrusimha was to grace Prahlada, while that of Rama took place for the enjoyment and protection of Rishis. Furthermore, the Daya from these avatarams could only be experienced by those who lived during these avatarams. However, one whose Daya is constant for all is the exclusive privy of Lord Srinivasa. Svami Nammazhvar declares "aathi aM sOthi uruvai, angu vaitthu ingu pirantha" namely the Lord, who is replete with Tejas in Srivaikuntam exudes the same Tejas at Tirumalai. Therefore, His Daya for all beings is incomparable. Hence Svami Desikan has dedicated this tribute exclusively for the Lord of Seven Hills. This theme can be seen from all the preceding slokams.



Only after He beholds Thayar and has Her approving glances does the Lord proceed with His many acts.

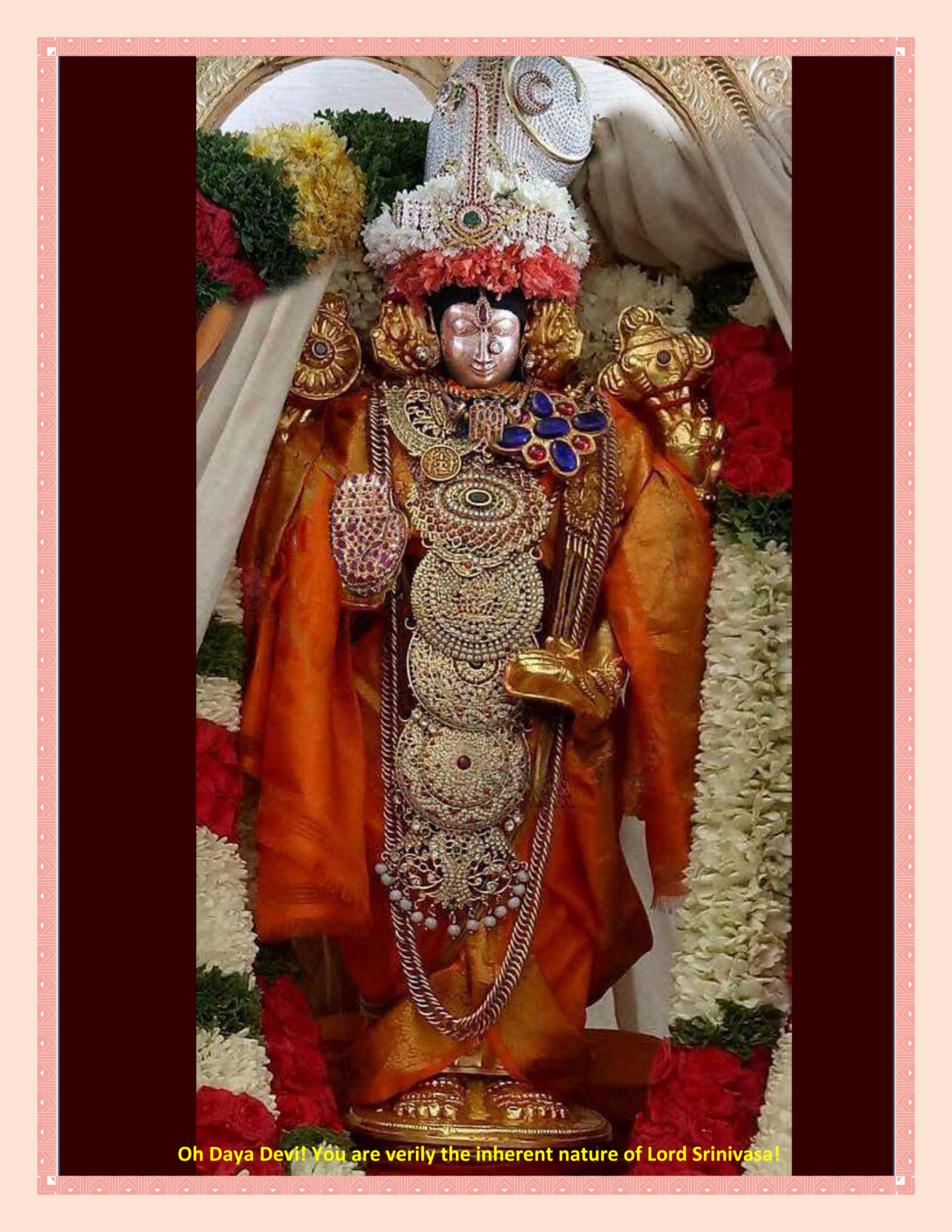
It must be borne in mind that Lord Srinivasa, who is described as a farmer, is greatly delighted by the bumper crop of Saranagatas as a result of Daya Devi. Furthermore, the Divya Mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa too is an act of Daya Devi. When the Lord of such munificence has taken root at Tiruvenkatam, He also needs to carry out the act of Pralayam. jaladheriva shItatA daye tvaM vR^iShashailAdhipateH svabhAva bhUtaa pralayArabhaTI naTIM tadIkShAM prasabhaM grAhayasi prasatti lAsyam is the salutation used by Svami Desikan to describe this act of the Lord. Pralayam is caused by His Sankalpam. So too are the acts of srushti and stithi. tatteja aikShata bahu syAṃ prajAyeyeti is the Vedam salutation that describes this act. The Lord does not have to be physically engaged in these acts. His mere sankalpam is sufficient for them to come about. Here an important question arises. Daya Devi is engaged only in gracing all comers with goodness. However, pralayam is caused by the nigraha sankalpam (the way to mete out punishment). However, when the Lord is associated with Daya and has Her apeksha, He should not be angered? How then is He angered to cause pralayam? Moreover, His sankalpam is subservient to Daya Devi. Sri Kurathazhvar salutes this aspect of the Lord seeking Thayar's approval for His every act through the tribute:

yasyA vIkShya mukhaM tadingitaparAdhIno vidhatte(a)khilaM

krIDeyaM khalu nAnyathA(a)sya rasadA syAdaikarasyAttayaa

Only after He beholds Thayar and has Her approving glances does He proceed with His many acts. Svami Desikan describes Thayar as "anugrahamayIM vande nityamaj~nyAta nigrahAm" in the Yatiraja Saptati salutation. Nigraham does not exist in the dictionary of Thayar. She is unaware of the term nigraham. Since Daya Devi is none other than Thayar, when Bhagavad Sankalpam is itself subservient to Daya Devi, how then could the act of Pralayam be carried out? For those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi if there is an act which incurs Her anger, what is the recourse? This becomes truly scary. Svami Desikan reassures everyone that there is no need to fear. All things have an inherent characteristic. For example, with water it is the feeling of coolness. For fire, it is the tendency to burn. However, it is possible for water to get hot. In a like manner, the Lord inherently possesses the Daya gunam and is compassionate towards all. This is depicted in the opening line of this verse as "Oh Daya Devi! You are verily the inherent nature of Lord Srinivasa." According to Kalidasa "chaityaṃ hi yat sA prakrutiH jalasya" Water's essential nature is to provide coolness. In a like manner, the inherent nature of Lord Srinivasa is Daya. All others gunams are acquired. svabhAvo nopadeshena shakyate kartumanyathA, sutaptamapi pAnIyaM punargacChati

shItatAm is the salutation which describes the fact that the inherent nature of all beings is extremely hard to change. No matter how much water is boiled it eventually returns to its cool state. Thus, it is impossible to rid water of its cool state. In a like manner, it is impossible to change the essential nature of all beings. When this prevails, He whose essential nature is Daya does not lose it even if it appears as if He is at times acting contradictory to this Daya gunam. Thus, the Lord does not lose His inherent nature of Daya. Svami Desikan uses the analogy of the ocean to describe Lord Srinivasa while Kalidasa uses the analogy of water. It is important to note that during the extremely hot summertime, the surface waters of the ocean may become hot. However, the deeper layers of the ocean retain the intrinsic nature of coolness. In a like manner, even though the Lord may engage in acts contrary to His essential nature, it is like the surface waters of the ocean heating up during the summer. Since the Lord retains the essential nature of Daya, those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi have nothing to fear. How then is pralayam accounted for? Also, some may perceive their troubles as an act of nigraham on the part of the Lord. How can these be explained? This is accounted for in the latter part of this verse through a skillful connection to Natya Sastram (dance). There are two forms of dance one known as Arabhati, which is intense in terms of exercising one's limbs and demands a great deal of effort. The other is lAsyam, which is graceful involving no vigorous shaking of the limbs. Instead, it is abinayam conveyed through pleasant facial expression. This is akin to music that which is loud and thunderous versus music that is melodious. The former can only be tolerated for a short while. However, the latter can be enjoyed for a long time. Here, the Arabhati form of dance refers to Perumal's actions while effecting pralayam. In this verse tadIkShAM denotes Bhagavad sankalpam. The Arabhati or uddhata natanam can be for a male or female form. Why is this Arabhati form on display? The kaLebharams that jivans are endowed with are meant to be used for engaging in service of the Lord. However, when these are put to use for purposes contrary to the sastraic prescriptions, despite numerous warnings they greatly anger the Lord. The only mechanism to stop this is by causing pralayam. This is in the form of Arabhati nardanam. Daya Devi beholds this form of dance (grAhayasi). She immediately realizes that this causes a great strain to the Lord. Additionally, it is fearsome to behold. Therefore, by Her looks She commands the Lord to adopt instead a pleasing form of dance known as lAsyam. prasatti denotes the process of creation (Srishti). It may be asked who is in the audience for this dance. This would be the Nitya suris, Muktas, and the Lord himself. It may also be asked, after all the Lord Himself has undertaken the act of Arabhati. Why not He dance for a long time?



Oh Daya Devi! You are verily the inherent nature of Lord Srinivasa!

This would result in a dosham for the Lord since He is hailed as akhila heya pratyanIkan (there are no inauspicious aspects for the Lord). By indulging in anger for a long time, He is acquiring a defect in that anger is a heya gunam. To ensure that Bhagavan preserves the title of akhila heya pratyanIkan, Daya Devi intervenes in a timely fashion and immediately calms the anger of the Lord and makes Him focus on the pleasing aspect of Srishti. This has been documented previously in the 16th verse summary of this stotram through the salutation "AsR^iShTi santatAnAm aparAdhAnAM nirodhinIM jagataH| padmA sahAya karuNe pratisa~njara kelimAcarasi". Therein it was declared that Daya Devi is the cause for pralayam. In this verse it is being documented that the Lord effects pralayam. Is this not a contradiction? The Sruti declares "bahusyAm prajAyeti" There is no contradiction because this comes about as a result of Bhagavad sankalpam which is subservient to Daya Devi. Thus, in this instance even though pralayam is being effected due to Bhagavad sankalpam in accordance with the Sruti vAkyam, the cause for this is undoubtedly Daya Devi. This is analogous to a husband and wife, where all actions undertaken by the husband are pre-coordinated with his spouse. Therefore, it may appear as if the husband is performing the various acts of charity and the like. However, discerning ones recognize that the lady controls all the actions of her husband. Thus, it does not mean that the husband is acting independently. Instead, he is merely executing that which his spouse wishes. In a like manner, all of the Lord's intentions and sankalpam come about as a result of Daya Devi. Therefore, there is absolutely no contradiction between the previous verses where Daya Devi was declared to be the cause of Pralayam, Srishti, and Stithi as well as this verse where it is held that Bhagavad sankalpam, which is under Daya Devi's control, is responsible for Pralayam, Srishti, etc. It may then be asked the Lord getting angry during pralaya time is understandable. What about the times during His incarnations as Rama and Krishna, when He became angry? The primary purpose of these avatarams was to protect the Sadhus. This being the case, there is no place for anger. How does one account for this fact? This is answered in the next verse.

Next, we quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Your cool, gracious, generous, and fond nature is the rule. Lord Venkatesha is no doubt Merciful, by the very nature of spontaneous affection that marks Daya. That His normal nature is Daya-filled is not at all disputable. That He effects pralaya (the great deluge) in an apparent mood of anger and punishment must be carefully understood. There is a dancer, a lady, depicting a ferocious woman, violently jumping up and down with threatening cries. It is termed uddhata natya. However, in a moment she switches over to Lasya natya in which she

presents fine delicate, gentle emotions in a sweet abhinaya natya. In a like manner Daya Devi too forcibly adopts the scaring dance variety fit for deluge presentation.

1. There is a proverb: Exceptions prove the rule. The Lord's Daya takes an aggressive mode of anger during deluge emphasizes that Daya is always soft, gentle, generous, kindly, and fond.

2. Though two roles are visible, the latter is normal. The former is what is assumed, for the specific purpose of causing the great deluge."



Slokam 24

प्रणत प्रतिकूल मूल घाती प्रतिघः कोऽपि वृषाचलेश्वरस्य ।

कळमे यवसापचाय नीत्या करुणे किंकरतां तवोपयाति ॥ २४ ॥

praNata pratikUla mUla ghAtI pratighaH ko(a)pi vR^iShAchaleshvarasya|

kalame yavasApachAya nItyA karuNe kiMkaratAM tavopayAti||24



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin

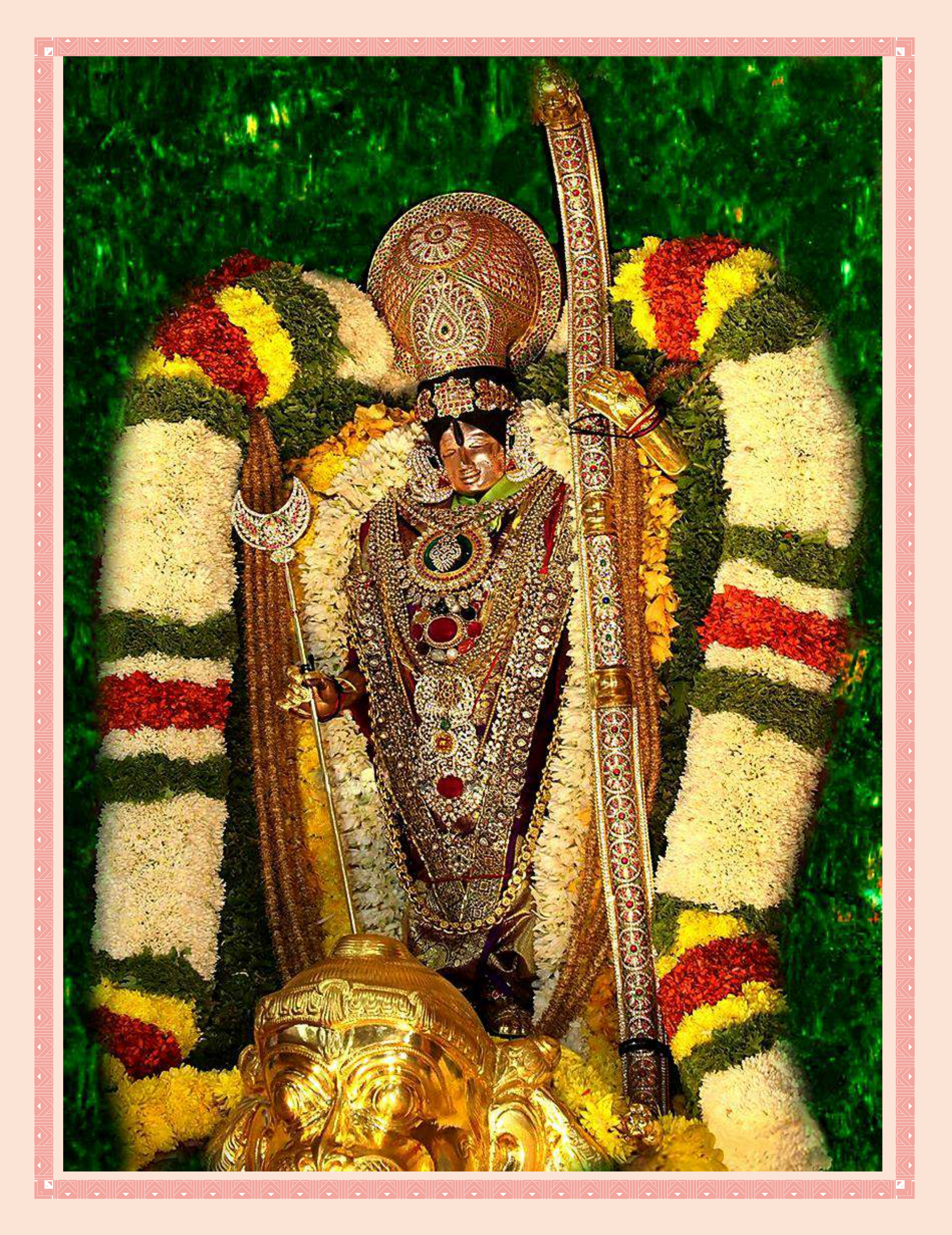
"Before delving into the meaning of this slokam, it is important to gain an understanding of the reason for Vibhava avatarams and how they come about. It is not possible to ordinarily understand the reason for the Lord's avataram. This can be gleaned from the Bhagavadgita, where Lord Krishna himself declares "Arjuna it is impossible to know the reason for My avatarams or when they take place. Only I know how this comes about." yadA yadA hi dharmasya glAnirbhavati bhArata, abhyuthAnam adharmasya tadAtmAnam srujAmyaham| "When there is a decline in dharma and increase in adharma, I incarnate" is the import of this verse. Furthermore, the Lord declares "sambhavAmi yuge yuge" (I incarnate in every Yuga). Why then does the Lord incarnate? What is the purpose of His incarnation? These questions are answered in the next verse "paritrANAya sAdhUnAm vinAshAya ca duShkr^itAm dharma samsthApanArthAya sambhavAmi yuge yuge". There are 3 reasons for the Lord's incarnation (i) Protect the virtuous ones (ii) Destroy the evil ones (iii) Establish Dharma. The order of these reasons is also important. The middle one, destroying evil ones, is pivotal to the cause of the Lord's avataram. Without this the first and last would not be possible. This is called dehali deepa nyAyam. When a lamp is lit at the threshold of a home it illumines both the inside and the outside of the home. However, when lit inside the home, it only illumines the inside of the house. In a like manner, only when performing the middle function do the first and the last functions become possible. In order to protect the virtuous ones, destruction of evil becomes a pre-requisite. Similarly, establishment of Dharma requires the destruction of those who are engaged in adharma - the evil ones. Upon understanding this fundamental tenet, we can now appreciate the meaning of this verse of the Daya Satakam. vR^iShAchaleshvarasya pratighaH is the key message of this verse.



paritrANAya sAdhUnAm vinAshAya ca duShkr^itAm dharma samsthApanArthAya sambhavAmi yuge yuge

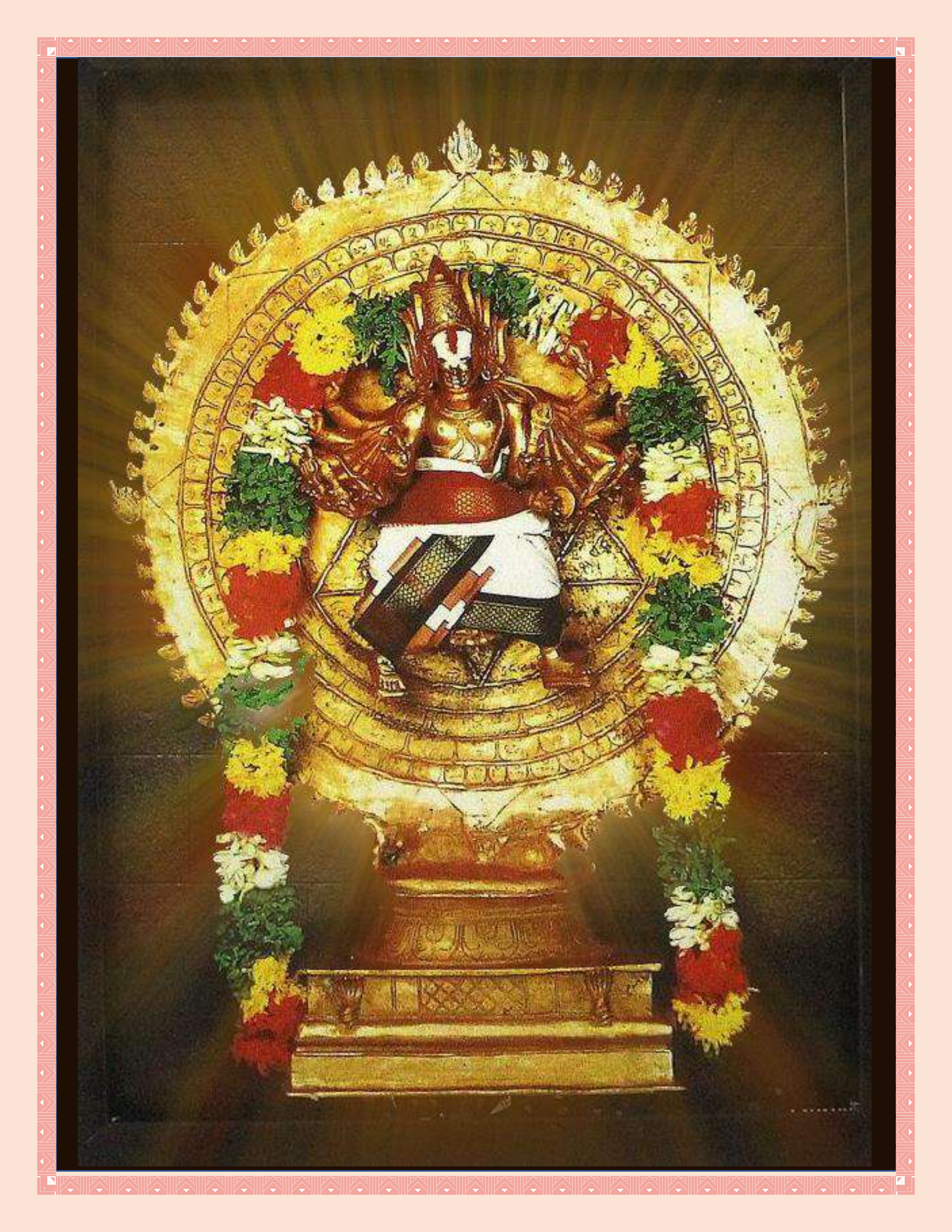
The Lord is greatly angered when pratikUla mUla ghAtI occurs, namely when someone acts in a manner that is hurtful to His Bhaktas or those who incur apacharam towards Bhagavatas. His anger resolves to destroy to the root the cause of these apacharams. Furthermore, in the Bhagavadgita the Lord declares that he bears no ill will towards anyone. However, in this instance the Lord's anger is directed towards those who act in a manner that incurs apacharam towards Bhagavatas who have performed Saranagati to the Lord. In the Krishna Avataram, when the Lord went to the sabha of the Kauravas as a messenger of the Pandavas, Duryodhana enquired of him "What is it that I have done wrong to you? Why have you joined my adversaries the Pandavas?" The Lord answers "I am absolutely

impartial. You have not done Me any wrong." Duryodhana then asks "Why are you angry with me?" The Lord answers "pANDavAndveShTi bho rAjan mama prANA hi pANDavAH" meaning "these Pandavas, who you regard as your adversaries and harbor hatred for are none other than My life breath. Therefore you become My enemy." In the Rama Avatram, when entering the Dandaka forest for His vanavasam, the Lord is welcomed warmly by a host of Maharishis. They offer Him a variety of fruit. Lord Rama gently submits to the Maharishis that "I am not the Prince that has been coronated. I am a commoner most undeserving of these upacharams that you have affectionately bestowed upon me." To this, the Maharishis answered "nagarastho vanastho vA tvam naH rAjA janeshvaraH" (Regardless of whether you are in the forest or the city You are Our King.) Lord Rama was greatly overwhelmed by this submission of the Maharishis and was greatly delighted. He was thinking to himself "These great Maharishis declare me-a mere commoner-as their King. aho bhAgyam" The Lord accepted their upacharams after which the Maharishis take the Lord to their Ashramam for a tour. There He beholds in the ashramam backyard a large collection of bones. The Lord enquires of the Maharishis the reason for this large number of bones. The Maharishis reply "ehi pashya sharIrANi munInAm bhAvita AtmanAm" Several Maharishis were engaged in tapas here. However, Rakshasas such as Khara, DhushaNa, and Ravana, would come here, kill the rishis, feast on their flesh and cast away their bones. This is the collection that You are seeing. Upon hearing this, Lord Rama was moved to tears. He is torn apart by grief that these Maharishis, who regard Him as the King, have to undergo enormous suffering under His watch while engaged in tapas. He then undertakes an oath in the presence of the Maharishis "I resolve to destroy the entire group of Rakshasas that have been causing you great harm and come in the way of your tapas. This is My sworn position." The Maharishis were overjoyed upon hearing the Lord's pledge almost as if the problem was solved. After this, Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana took leave of the sages. Sita Devi enquires of Lord Rama "I have a doubt which needs to be cleared. Any act that You engage in would always be correct. However, I merely want to verify something and hence I am asking. You have taken the sworn position of destroying the Rakshasas who are troubling these Maharishis engaged in tapas. What harm have these Rakshasas caused us? Nothing. Why then the terrible oath to destroy the entire Rakshasa clan? I do not know if this is Dharma. However, if You say so it is acceptable to me. I am merely enquiring."



Lord Rama answers this through the verse “api aham jIvitam jahyAm tvAm vA sIte sa lakShmaNAm || na tu pratij~nAm saMshrutya brAhmaNebhyo visheShataH |” meaning, “This is a matter containing a dharma sukshmam. You need to understand this. These Maharishis have performed SaraNagati to me. They have submitted that in order to engage in their tapas they need to be freed from the troubles inflicted upon them by the Rakshasas. They have requested that I alone should bless them to enable their uninterrupted tapas. Because, of this I have sworn to protect them. Therefore, at any cost I am bound to protect them. That which is most dear to anyone is their life. In this instance, I am prepared to give up My life if need be, in order to uphold My promise to these Maharishis. Over My own life I value you, oh Sita and Lakshmana. I am prepared to forsake you and Lakshmana who is even dearer to Me than you.” Here it must be noted that when Lakshmana was rendered unconscious by the astra of Indrajit, the vanara army thought he had lost his life. Rama keeps Lakshmana’s head on His lap and cries out “deshe deshe kalatrANi deshe deshe ca bAndhavAH”. Each place one visits one can acquire a wife. Each place one visits one develops close associates. However, where can I find a brother like you? taM tu deshaM na pashyAmi yatra bhrAtA sahodaraH is the Ramayanam salutation which describes the sentiment of Lord Rama. Even such a dear Lakshmana the Lord is prepared to forsake in order to uphold His promise to the Maharishis. The salutation “na tu pratij~nAm saMshrutya brAhmaNebhyo visheShataH” is emphasized once again to denote that Lord Rama would forsake His life, Sita Devi who is dearer to Him than His own life, as well as Lakshmana, who is even dearer than Sita, but will never renege on His promise to the Maharishis. Therefore, it must be understood that the Lord holds no ill-will towards anyone. However, those who seek to harm His Saranagatas become His sworn enemies. Thus, the salutation “praNata pratikUla mUla ghAtI” is the salutation which needs to be understood in the context of the Lord’s sworn position to destroy at the very root those who are inimical to His Saranagatas. There is a sukshmartham embedded here. If one is friendly and well inclined towards someone it is the individual’s sukrutam. On the other hand if one is inimical, it is the result of papam. When the individual wonders “I have caused this person no harm. Yet he remains distant from me. Why does this come about?” This is the papa visesham. This is no fault of the individual that is inimically inclined. On the other hand, someone may be at a great distance. However, he may be well inclined and develop intimacy. This is the result of sukrutam. In a like manner, the mUlam for

pratikUlam is the sins accumulated. This is eliminated by the anger of Lord Srinivasa. ko(a)pi vR^iShAchaleshvarasya is the salutation used to describe the Lord's anger - this is anirvacanIyam - that which cannot be described by words. This can be understood through the charithram of Ambarisha. Durvasa who sought to harm Ambarisha was relentlessly pursued by the Sudarshana Chakram of the Lord. First the Chakram destroyed the fiendish creation of Durvasa that advanced menacingly towards Ambarisha. Then the Chakram began an unrelenting pursuit of Durvasa. Durvasa traversed all lokas in an attempt to seek protection. However, no one could rescue him from the Sudarshana Chakram. He approached Lord Vishnu for help. However, Lord Vishnu too pleaded helplessness in this respect. His advice to Durvasa was, "If you had incurred apacharam towards Me, I can easily relieve you of your trouble. However, you have incurred BhAgavata apacharam. You can be relieved of the consequences of this apacharam only if you request Ambarisha for forgiveness. If he forgives you you will be free from trouble from the Sudarshana Chakrram." Therefore, the Lord's anger is exclusively directed towards those who are inimical towards his Saranagatas. Hence, there is no need for fear in this regard. The lakshanam of this anger also needs to be understood. This is best captured by Svami Bhashyakarar in the Gita Bhashyam wherein he states "If one seeks something very dearly, and is unable to get this, the disappointment at not getting this manifests in the form of making someone accountable for this failure. This is known as anger. This can arise when one does not get what one was longing for dearly. It also occurs when someone begets something that is undesirable. For example, if one is looking forward to the arrival of a distinguished guest to join our family for a meal but the guest does not come. On the other hand, there is someone who is most unwelcome at the home but shows up. The gunam on display in these two instances is known as anger." When it comes to the anger of the Lord, is meant for those who obstruct the existence and activities of Saranagatas, or those who are undesired by the Saranagatas. There is another issue pertaining to the Lord's anger in that it is not permanent. It only exists for a short while. In the Ramayana, when the Lord is engaged in war with Ravana, upon beholding Ravana, Lord Rama becomes extremely angry. Afterall this is the one who caused Him untold difficulties. Due to this anger the Lord engages in a furious battle with Ravana. Even though the Lord is angry, in one salutation of the Ramayana, he declares "I am using my arrows against you out of anger. However, if you succumb to this and become tranquil, you will be fully cleansed".



Therefore, it must be understood that even the Lord's anger ultimately is for the good of the individual that He is angry at in that, it reforms him. The latter part of this verse ending in "karuNe kiMkaratAM tavopayAti" describes the fact that even the Lord's anger is subservient to Daya Devi. In other words, Daya Devi directs who the anger should be targeted at.

This verse provides the drushtantam (perspective) for the previous verse. "kalame yavasApachAya nItyA kiMkaratAM tavopayAti" Paddy crops are planted. However, in addition weeds too grow and obstruct the growth of the paddy crops. Thus, the weeds need to be pulled out. In a like manner, protection of the sadhus and establishment of dharma necessarily requires the destruction of the evil ones. This is brought about by the Lord's anger, which is subservient to Daya Devi. However, this does not take away from the fact that the Lord's nature is inherently replete with Daya. Thus, one does not need to worry about the Lord's anger. It must also be noted that in a prior verse, Lord Srinivasa was glorified as a farmer. His job is the growth of paddy crops and other grains. The pulling out of the weeds becomes a secondary task, in the sense that while it is necessary to ensure the crop growth, it is not the primary function. In a like manner, the purpose of the Lord's avataram is to protect virtuous ones. The destruction of evil ones is merely a by-product in the process of protecting the virtuous ones.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa develops a unique, unparalleled wrath, which aims at eradicating the evil forces that pester society and harm good people - just as Hiranya and Ravana did in their respective periods. However, this trait "anger" ought not to be treated as an independent quality vying with Daya or His other virtues. Why? This anger is but a mere servant of Daya, who is the queen of His qualities. Daya employs this "anger" as a servant, as a weed-puller to pluck grass, short weeds etc. which hinder the growth of paddy crops, stealing off all nutrition from Mother Earth. Anger performs a menial task as a servant to the quality called karuNa.

1. The implication of this theme is that the Lord is predominantly prompted by Daya gunam only. Anger as and when it operates is merely a menial servant of Daya

2. Daya Devi is the queen among the Lord's auspicious attributes. Other gunas function as Daya Devi's servants.

3. A very important operation in agriculture is to weed out grass, shrubs, and weeds, that sap vitality due to be absorbed by the grain plant. Weeding out is a vital operation. The idiom has appropriately entered into our diction to remove bad elements in any group or community**.”**



Slokam 25

अबहिष्कृत निग्रहान् विदन्तः कमलाकान्तगुणान् स्वतन्त्रादीन्।

अविकल्पमनुग्रहं दुहानां भवतीमेव दये भजन्ति सन्तः॥ २५॥

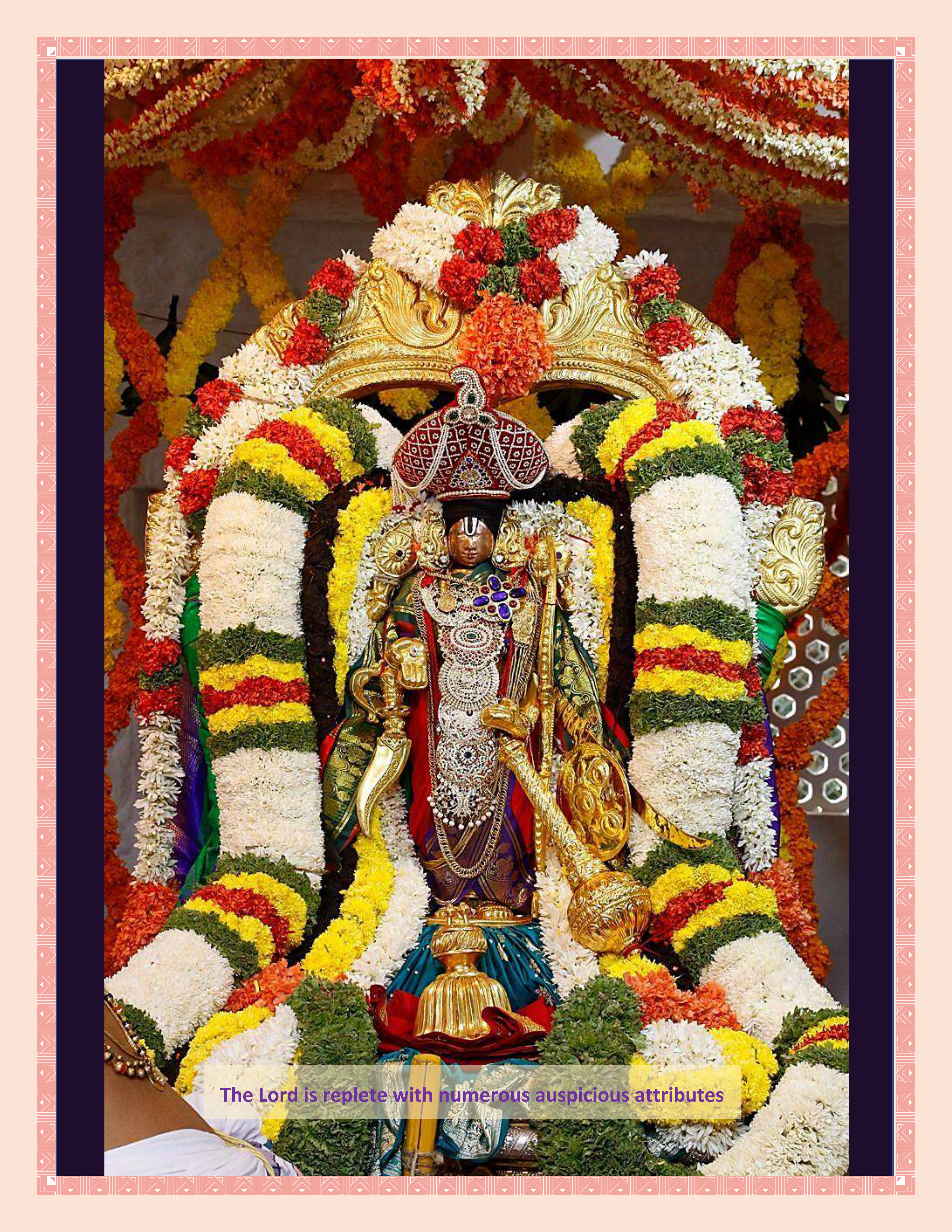
abahiShkR^ita nigrahAn vidantaH kamalAkAnta guNAn svatantratAdIn|

avikalpaM anugrahaM duhAnAM bhavatImeva daye bhajanti santaH||25



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "It is clear that the Lord's anger too is to effect good ultimately. However, let us set this aside for a moment. It is in the manner of a patient being recommended a surgical operation to which he responds to the doctor, "Please keep this as the last resort. Please treat me with alternate medication which does not call for surgery." In a like manner, Svami Desikan states in this verse, let's not focus on the Lord's anger. Instead, it is the Lord's Daya that needs to be sought after. Svami Desikan states in this verse that he is following the footsteps of great masters - pre-eminent Acharyas and declares that he does not want to have anything to do with the Lord's anger during times of nigraham (destruction of evil ones). Instead, he turns his focus exclusively to Daya Devi, who exudes anugraham. abahiShkR^ita nigrahAn vidantaH kamalAkAnta guNAn svatantratAdIn is the salutation at the opening of this verse which alludes to this fact. The Lord is replete with numerous qualities. svatantryam - independence is one among them. j~nana, bala, aisvarya, sakti, tejas, vatsalya, madhurya are the other salient gunams amongst His numerous auspicious attributes. Now Daya exists with all of these gunams. The question that naturally arises in this context is whether Saranagati should be performed to Daya in isolation or Daya associated with these other gunams?

In examining the import of Slokams 21-214 it appears that Daya associated with these other gunams needs to be saluted. Why? If the Lord was not allied with the other gunams and in particular, svatantryam, mere Daya would not serve the purpose. It is also important to note that the other gunams are present when the Lord engages in the task of anugraham as well as nigraham. However, Daya exists exclusively for the task of anugraham. vidantaH is the salutation used to describe the fact that Svami Desikan follows the path trodden by the great masters. They have affirmed that other gunams besides Daya are present during the time of nigraham. They do not stop the Lord in the act of nigraham. Therefore, these other



The Lord is replete with numerous auspicious attributes

gunams are not worthy of seeking refuge for the purpose of Saranagati. The Vedam salutation which declares that one must follow the path of learned ones when in doubt is the Taittiriya Upanishad salutation yathA te tatra varteran|tathA tatra vartethAH| What then is the path trodden by the great masters? It is the fact that they have sought refuge exclusively in Daya which stands alone - not the one associated with other gunams. vidantaH also points to the Taittriya Upanishad salutation alUkShA dharmakAmAsyuH|

Another question that arises is what is gained by surrendering to Daya in exclusion? Will She grant everything that the seeker wants? Svami Desikan answers this through a beautiful choice of words in the salutation avikalpaM anugrahaM duhAnAM bhavatImeva daye bhajanti santaH. The import of this verse is that Daya Devi uniformly carries out the task of anugraham without exception. The term nigraham is non-existent in Her dictionary. It is like a cow which yields pure milk to its calf without exception. In a like manner, Daya Devi exudes anugraham for all.

The term vikalpam can also be interpreted in the context of Bhakti yogam and Prapatti yogam, which are the two established means to attain moksham and experience brahmananda anubhavam. Those who are capable of Bhakti yogam adopt this means, while those who are unable to adopt Bhakthi yogam resort to Prapatti yogam. Bhakti yogam ensures the exhaustion of all karma after innumerable number of births. However, Saranagati or Prapatti yogam is the only one which destroys prArabdha karma and grants moksham at the end of birth when Saranagati is performed. This unfailing granting of moksham through the Saranagati path is known as avikalpam or that which happens without exception and without discrimination of any kind.

In a like manner Daya Devi unfailingly, uniformly without discrimination, and without exception of any kind showers anugraham on all seekers. Therefore, She is the one sought after by santaH (those treading the right path). This Daya Devi ensures that the sin-pile of Her seekers, which come in the way of obtaining Bhagavad anugraham are ruthlessly and completely destroyed, rendering them the perfect receptacles for the Lord's grace. This is the tribute submitted by Svami Desikan to Daya Devi.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"The Lord has many virtues such as absolute independence, aisvarya, etc. All such traits suffer one stigma; they have not totally ruled out the punishment trait. That is, they may involve a little at least of such a trait. Svami Desikan contends that we cannot accept those qualities with respect. Therefore, Svami Desikan draws

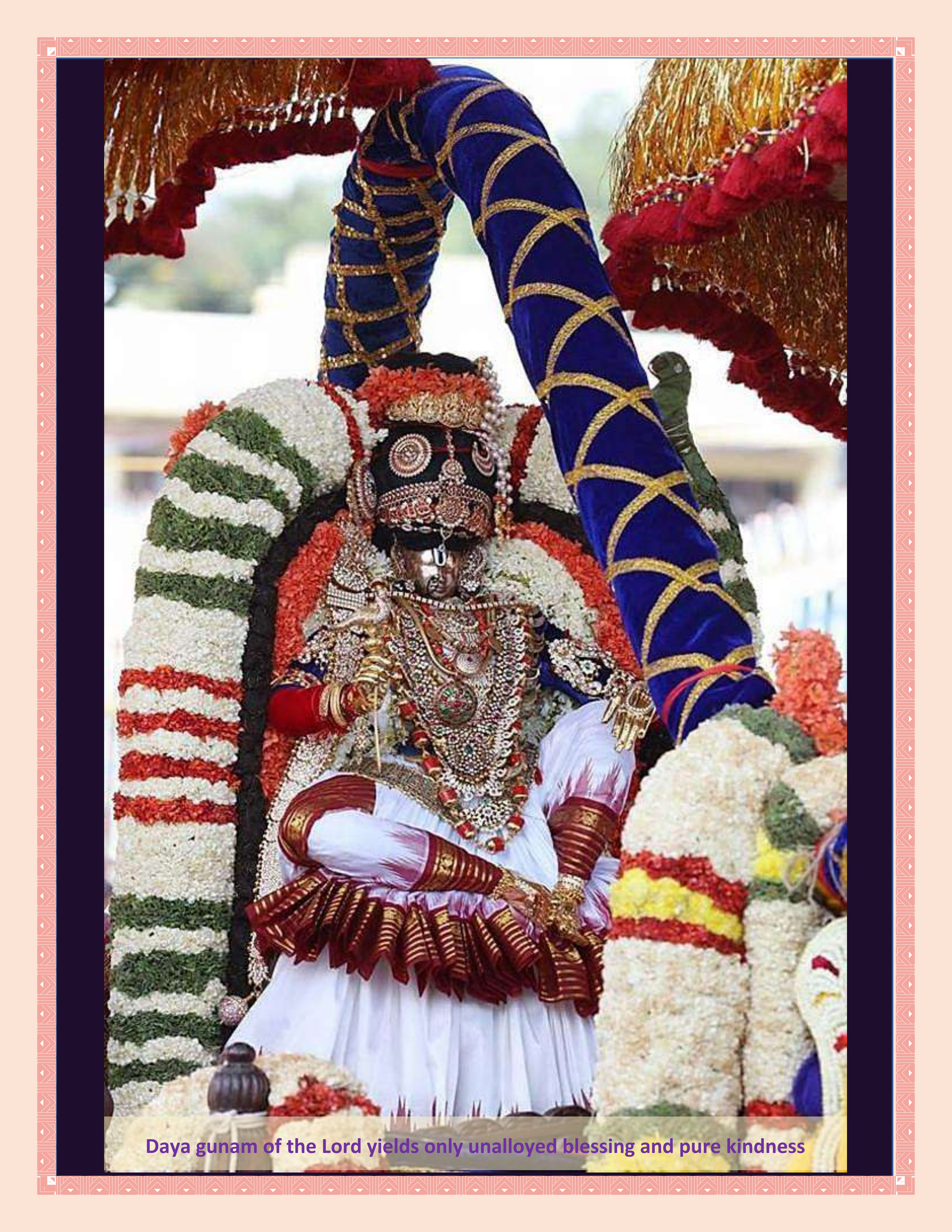
inspiration from the path followed by the great masters and declares that we would rather respect the judgement of the great Sadhus, who revere, resort to, and praise the glory of only such qualities that would exude pure and unalloyed gracious blessing through Daya-flow. As for these Sadhus, they would exclusively resort to seeking refuge at Daya Devi's feet.

1. Those qualities such as total independence, unquestioned suzerainty, Lordship, etc have a characteristic that would involve meting out punishment, which is alien to Daya. As Kamadhenu would only provide delicious nutritious milk, whatever its feed be, Daya gunam on the other hand yields only unalloyed blessing and pure kindness.

2. All the qualities of the Lord cannot bear the same stamp of unalloyed blessing like Daya Devi, notwithstanding the fact that they are all auspicious and they adorn the Lord.

3. Those are qualities, which are not discerning enough to differentiate between "anugraha" and "nigraha". They contribute to both these treatments indiscriminately."





Daya gunam of the Lord yields only unalloyed blessing and pure kindness

Slokam 26

कमलानिलयस्त्वया दयालुः करुणे निष्करुणा निरूपणे त्वम्।

अत एव हि तावकाश्रितानां दुरितानां भवति त्वदेव भीतिः॥ २६॥

kamalAnilayastvayA dayAluH karuNe niShkaruNA nirUpaNe tvam|

ata eva hi tAvakAshritAnAM duritAnAM bhavati tvadeva bhItiH|| 26



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We have examined the prabhAvam of Daya Devi thus far. We have also seen the upakAram rendered by Daya Devi to Lord Srinivasa. In the previous verse it was also affirmed that the considered position of santaH (those who never deviate from the righteous path) is that sharaNAgati is to be performed to Daya Devi alone since She is the epitome of anugraham, and nigraham is non-existent in her dictionary. Here, the Lord is the AdhAram for all kalyANa gunam. guNam is adravyam. Only when it is supported by one possessed of this trait does it become prominent. For example, whiteness is a characteristic. However, it becomes prominent when associated with a cloth. Similarly, sweetness is a taste. However, this can be experienced only by partaking of sugar. Similarly, all kalyaNa guNams of the Lord are mere traits or qualities by themselves. However, they get prominence only on account of being associated with Lord Srinivasa. In this verse Svami Desikan affirms that the Lord replete with these kalyaNa guNams (other than Daya), is secondary and that Daya Devi alone reigns supreme. Daya Devi's next upakAram to Lord Srinivasa is discussed here. Specifically, the Lord is addressed as DayALu on account of His association with Daya Devi. The term DayaLu is not to be taken lightly because it is a major title. DayaLu denotes easy accessibility - one who can be approached readily. This is indicative of the fact that due to Daya Devi alone, Lord Srinivasa ignores the mountainous sin-pile of those who seek refuge in Him and confers His grace. tvayA dayAluH is the salutation that describes this in this verse.

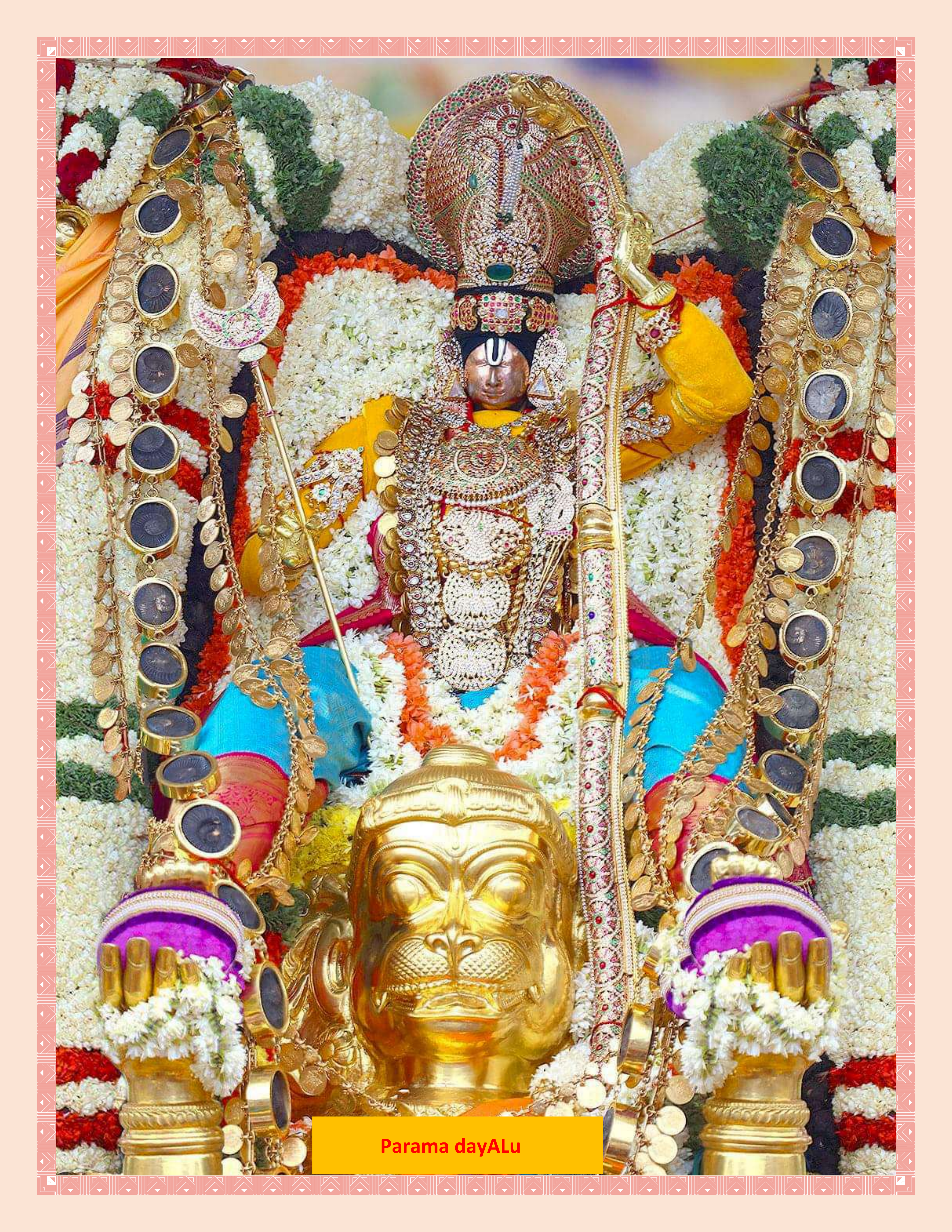
Next, Tirumazhisai Azhvar declares:

kulangkaLAya IriraNDil onRilum piRantilEn

nalangaLAya naRkalaikaL nAvilum navinRilEn

pulankaL aintum venRilEn poRiyilEn punita nin

ilangu pAtam anRi maRROr paRRilEn em IsanE||


Parama dayALu

Here the Azhwar engages in naichyam. In reality this is a reflection of the faults of commoners since the Azhvar led a blemishless life of service to the Lord. In the Stotra ratnam, Svami Alavandar implores to Lord Narayana “I am full of faults. I have no qualification other than being the grandson of Svami Nathamuni. I request you to consider this fact and bestow your grace upon me” The point to be observed here is that the mere mention of Nathamuni is sufficient to move the Lord. The kulam of Nathamuni is known as SoTTaikulam and is replete with numerous distinctions. This is merely meant to highlight the greatness of SoTTaikulam and not belittle other kulams. Tirumazhisai Azhvar in the above tribute declares, I am not blessed with birth in a family that is distinguished. Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad-Gita catur-varNyam mayA sR^iShTam (the four varNas are My creation). The Azhvar laments that perhaps if he was born in one of the four varNas created by the Lord himself, perhaps he would be privy to the Lord’s grace. However, the Azhvar declares that this is not possible because of his birth in the fifth varNam. Even if this is disregarded, it may be asked has the Azhvar distinguished himself by the study of the scriptures or of the Lord and has adopted this knowledge as a means for constantly contemplating on the Lord? The Azhvar laments that he does not possess this knowledge. Even if this is disregarded, it may be asked is the Azhvar knowing the supremacy of Lord Narayana engaged in constant dhyanam of the Lord by reciting His numerous names? The Azhvar again answers this in the negative. Then the Azhvar thinks one may ask “have you used your indriyas exclusively in service of the Lord?” The Azhvar declares even this is impossible for him to control them and that they have free to act in any manner. The importance of Indriya nigraham (control over the senses) is alluded to here. The Azhvar then enquires is the mind under his control? This too is answered in the negative. The Azhvar then affirms that he is aware of one thing - the Lord’s Lotus feet and that they are his sole refuge and that the Lord is his Master. There is no other path for him. This fact embeds the five angas and one angi for sharaNAgati - namely AnukUlyasya sankalpaH (acting in a manner acceptable to the Lord), prAtikulyasya varjanam (refraining from acts that incur the Lord’s displeasure), rakShiShyatIti vishvAso (extreme faith that the Lord alone will protect at all times in all circumstances), kArpaNyam (dependence on the Lord for everything), goptrutva varaNam tatha (lack of any other means of protection) and the angi of BarasamarpaNam (offering the atma to the Lord). One who performs sharaNAgati in this manner is assured of the Lord’s grace. (We need to be extremely cautious here in that the Azhvar being a nityasuri amsham is extremely well versed in all the scriptures, the Lord’s nAmAs, VedAs, ItihAsAs, and PurANas and the code of

conduct of a Parama SrivaishNavan. However, in keeping with the VarNAshrama dharma, he does not exhibit this knowledge. His declaration needs to be understood in the spirit of intense naichyam - self-deprecation before the Lord. All the questions raised in the Azhvar pAsuram are rhetorical in nature). Once this sharaNAgati is performed the Lord's grace inevitably falls on the supplicant without any consideration of caste, creed, erudition, wealth, or gender. This is due to the fact that He is dayaLu. This comes about only on account of Daya Devi. According to Svami NammAzhvar tribute "nIcanEn niRai onRum ilEn en kaN pAcam vaitta parancudar cOtikkE", if one exhibits affection for someone there needs to be a distinct reason - either by way of qualification, conduct, erudition, and the like. However, in this case the Azhvar declares that he is bereft of any of these qualifications. It is entirely for helping beings like these that Lord Narayana left His eternal abode of Sri VaikuNTham and took root at the VenkaTam hill declares the Azhvar. This again is due the Lord being dayaLu. This again comes about on account of Daya Devi (one may refer to the exposition of Slokam 22 to gain a further understanding of how the divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa came about). Svami Alavandar in the stotra ratnam tribute vashI vadAnyo guNavAn R^ijuH shuciH mRidurdayAlurmadhuraH sthiraH samaH refers to the Lord as DayaLu due to association with Daya Devi. Svami Desikan in the Varadaraja Panchasat offers the salutation:

bhUyo(a)pi hanta vasatiryadi me bhavitrI

yAmyAsu durviShahavR^ittiShu yAtanAsu |

samyag BhaviShyati tataH sharaNAgatAnAm

samrakShiteti birudam varada tvadIyam ||

(Oh Devaraja! I know of Your feet as my sole refuge and thus perform my surrender to You. In response Lord Varadaraja looks at numerous folks who have performed sharaNAgati and beholds the magnitude of their sins accumulated over countless births and wonders how is it possible to rescue them! Maybe they need to endure yamalokam for a short while before they can be redeemed. To this Swami Desikan responds with the submission "If I am condemned to yama lokam upon performance of sharaNAgati, the title of sharaNAgata rakShakan would be most inappropriate for You. Therefore, it is only befitting that you accept my sharaNAgati." In the sharaNAgati DIpika Stotram, Svami Desikan goes a step further and affirms that all the accolades, and titles for the Lord would be most unsuitable for Him unless the Lord accepts Svami Desikan's sharaNAgati and confers His grace.

svAmI dayAjalanidhirmadhuraH kShamAvAn

shIlAdhikaH shritavashaH shuciratyudAraH|

etAni hAtumanagho na kilArhasi tvaM

vikhyAtimanti virudAni mayA sahaiva ||

(The Lord has the title of master or owner of everything in the universe. This incurs the responsibility of protecting every being in the universe. However, this would be invalidated if He fails to protect me. The Lord is known as dayA sAgaram as denoted by the salutation daya jalAnidhiH. This would sit well on You only if You protect me. If not, You will be known as mahAkrUran (one that has extreme cruelty). The Lord is known as the sweet one. However, if He fails to protect me, He would not be worthy of this title. The Lord is known as kShamavAn due to His extremely forgiving nature. If He fails to protect me this title would be most inappropriate for Him. In a like manner the Lord has numerous titles shIlAdhika, shrithavasha and the like. If He fails to protect me, not only does it lead to my ruin it also results in Him giving up all these titles. Therefore, it is up to the Lord to retain these titles"). These quotations are meant to emphasize the fact the Lord acquires the grand title of dayaLu only on account of His association with Daya Devi. (The naichyam outpourings of Svami Alavandar and Svami Desikan need to be understood in the manner of these great Acharyas leading blemishless lives but taking on the plight of commoners, who approach the Lord).

The next question that arises is that can Daya guNam be known as dayaLu? This is not possible due to guNe-guNan angIkAra nyAyam, namely one guNam cannot exist in another. For example whiteness cannot have within it anything black. Similarly, sweetness cannot have anything else mixed in. Tanginess cannot be present in sweetness. In a similar vein, daya can never acquire another guNam. The Lord becomes dayaLu on account of Daya Devi flourishing at His feet. However, in keeping with the above explanation, Daya cannot beget the title dayaLu. Why? Those associated with daya guNam become dayaLu. Svami Desikan demonstrates his poetic mastery by noting that Daya itself is bereft of mercy in that She is merciless with respect to destroying the sin-pile of those who seek refuge in Her (It may be helpful to refer to the exposition on Slokam 13 in this context). This is not surprising. It is in keeping with the statement "paropadeshe pANDityaM sarveshAM sukaraM nR^iNAM dharme svIyaM anuShThAnaM kasya cittu mahAtmanAH" While rendering an upanyasam it is easy to exposit that one must conform to one's Dharma, and quote Veda pramANams like satyam vada dharmam cara (speak the truth; uphold your dharma) mAtru devo bhava pitru devo bhava AcArya devo bhava

athithi devo bhava (regard your mother, father, acharya and guests to your house like Lord Narayana). The Vedam declares one who engages in practice of this Vedic injunction receives enormous benefit "iShTAmpUrta bahudhA jAtaM jAyamAnaM vishvaM bibharti bhuvanasya nAbhiH". Construction of a well, making a pond are considered to be excellent modes of adherence to the Vedic injunction. Due to these acts, several beings get benefitted. As a consequence, the one who engages in these acts begets untold glory. However, when one asks the upanyAsakar, why not engage in practicing what is preached, there will be nothing forthcoming. However, one who practices every word of their exposition from upanyAsams is known as a Mahatma. This is an apt description for AcAryAs such as NAthamuni, YAmuna Muni, BhAshyakArar, SvAmi Desikan and successive AcAryas in their line.

Next Svami Desikan turns his attention to Daya Devi and declares "Oh Daya Devi! You are normally easily accessible. However, You create fear for some to come near You. Why does this occur? Is it not like the paropadeshe pANDityaM statement? You do not seem to act in the manner of AcAryAs. How so?" Svami Desikan proceeds to answer this through the tribute "karuNe niShkaruNA nirUpaNe tvam" (You exhibit absolutely no mercy). If one is known for his kindness and becomes known as a compassionate individual, there could be a rare occasion or so when the individual is unable to live up to this standing. This can then be used by common people to start berating the individual. In a similar vein, it appears as if Svami Desikan is actually condemning Daya Devi. This is known as nindaa stuti. The explanation for this follows immediately through the salutation "ata eva hi tAvakAshritAnAM duritAnAM bhavati tvadeva bhItiH" It is entirely due to Daya Devi's merciless quality that those sharaNAgatAs, who have sought You as their sole refuge, have their sins ruthlessly destroyed so much so causing a fear for the sins themselves. When it comes to Lord Srinivasa, the Upanishad declares "bhIShAsmAt vAtaH pavate| bhIShodeti sUryaH| bhIShAmAt agnishcendrashca| mR^ityurdhAvati pancama iti" (Out of fear for the Lord, Vayu performs his assigned duty; out of fear of the Supreme One, Surya performs his function; likewise out of fear for the Lord, Agni, Indra, and Yama perform their duties in accordance with their roles). However, when it comes to the sin-pile afflicting those who seek the Lord they have no fear. This is due to the fact that the Lord is an impartial judge. He metes out results according to the good and bad deeds of those who seek Him. Therefore, the sin-pile afflicting his seekers only results in enduring a lot of suffering on the part of the seeker. Therefore, the sin-pile can exist blissfully in the knowledge that the Lord does not seek to destroy it. However, the sin-pile trembles with fear when it comes to Daya Devi. Why so? This is because Daya Devi is

merciless towards the sin-pile as She ruthlessly destroys them. There are ways to rid oneself from the sin-pile. This can be either through experiencing the consequences for these sins at the end of which their effects are fully expended or through the performance of prAyashcittam (expiatory acts). However, in both of these instances, the sin-pile wins out. On the other hand, Daya Devi ensures that those who seek Her as their sole refuge are untouched by any sins on account of Her merciless nature towards them so much so the sin-pile fears Daya Devi. One can understand this through an example. Let's say a prominent person loses his prominence and glamour and is reduced to the status of a commoner. It indeed becomes a pitiable state and something that is most dreadful. This becomes the plight of the sin-pile on beholding Daya Devi, who destroys the sin-pile to the root. If one causes fear, it denotes the lack of compassion. In this instance therefore, Daya Devi is bereft of Daya when it comes to the sin-pile of Her supplicants. Hence, the tribute "karuNe niShkaruNA nirUpaNe tvam" is a most appropriate glorification for Daya Devi.

It needs to be examined whether Daya is being glorified or deprecated in this verse. This is not deprecatory. Instead, it is a nindaa-stuti, a tribute seemingly deprecatory but actually a glorification. Svami Desikan's poetic mastery allows him to resort to this logic while glorifying Daya Devi. Additionally, this verse embeds an important message from the Vedam. Anyone that undertakes an act does so with a result in mind. This can be a commoner or a VedAntin. In keeping with the statement "prayojanam anuddhishya na mando(a)pi pravartate" Even a complete idiot does not engage in a task without some benefit in mind. Similarly, it may be asked, what is the benefit of listening, when one listens to an upanyasam? Reading a book similarly comes with seeking an underlying benefit. Engaging in a task is done with the ultimate goal of getting the reward (this could be in the form of payment for work) so that one can engage in dharma kAryams. In a similar vein it may be questioned that the Lord has innumerable seekers? What is the benefit they get by seeking refuge in Him? The Lord answers this in the Bhagavad Gita salutation "caturvidA bhajante mAm" and then declares that the Brahma Ananda anubhavam is obtained by performing sharaNAgati to Him.

This gives rise to another question. Brahma anubhavam is the birth right for every being as Svami Desikan declares in the Srimad Rahasya trayasAram tribute "maNivara iva shaure nitya hR^ityopa jIvaH". That is every being is entitled to the Brahma Ananda anubhavam in the manner of the Kaustubha gem adorning the chest of Lord Narayana. When this is the case, it is almost like enjoyment of wealth gained through inheritance, which does not call for any effort at all. However, it



karuNe niShkaruNA nirUpaNe tvam

must be noted that there are certain obstacles that preclude the supplicant from gaining this knowledge of this benefit and adopting the means for obtaining it. For example, a lamp when unobstructed illuminates its surroundings. However, when the lamp is kept inside a large copper or brass vessel (kuDam), its ability to illuminate the surroundings is extremely restricted. Similarly, radiance is an essential trait of a diamond. However, when soiled it loses its lustre. When polished the lustre is restored. There is water beneath the earth's surface. However, its presence is masked by the mud on the surface. However, when the mud is removed after digging deep well-water surfaces. In a like manner the knowledge of every jIvan is limited on account of association with karma, which results in a mountainous pile of sins accumulated over innumerable births. When this is destroyed, the jIvan recognizes their birthright of Brahma Ananda anubhavam and adopts the means for attaining this benefit. The other kalyANa guNams of Lord Narayana aid the jivan by recommending that the jivan either endure the consequences of the sin-pile or perform expiatory acts to rid themselves of this sin-pile. However, they are incapable of completely destroying the sin-pile. However, Daya Devi acting in the manner of Andal's Tiruppavai tribute "tIyinil tUcAkum cheppElOr empAvAi" destroys the mountainous sin-pile. There is another sUkShma VedAnta message, whose import is conveyed in this verse. PuNyams (good acts) on the part of a jIvan result in anugraham (grace) of Lord Narayana, while pApam (sins) have the consequence of incurring the anger of the Lord and enduring untold suffering. What then does it mean to destroy the sins of a jIvan. Here is where Svami Desikan's genius becomes apparent. Svami declares that Daya Devi ensures that the sins committed by the jIvan are not seen by the Lord. Thereby all obstacles to receiving the Lord's grace are removed once and for all."

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svami:

"There is a fallacy in the science of logic known as reduction ad absurdum. This is provided to us in this verse by Svami Desikan thanks to Daya Devi. The Lord Srinivasa acquires the honorific of DayaLu due to his association with You. But for You He would not have this title as saluted by Svami Alavandar in the Stotra Ratnam verse 18. However, Oh Daya Devi! I find a different situation emerging. You are in actuality a cold merciless personage. Pardon me for saying so. What is Your impact? The sins that pertain to Your supplicant, which have been enjoying a safe asylum in him for long, are now driven out mercilessly, by You. You cannot allow an iota of sinfulness in one surrendered unto You. Therefore, those sins of Your supplicant, cherish a mortal fear only with respect to You, oh Daya Devi! To them You are indeed a malignant, merciless, mighty agent of destruction.

Whatever be the clever logic, it is mere fallacy. The Lord is kindly disposed to me. He need not be similarly disposed towards all my traits, possessions, relatives etc. So He wishes to destroy my sins/defects/diseases/enemies. What is wrong? To call my weaknesses or infections as “surrendered unto me” is mere fallacy or virtual euphemism. The Lord can kill my infections, which are enemies of my body and soul, in order to save me.

Kavitarkika simham has a lively way of making this case as in the present instance.”



Slokam 27

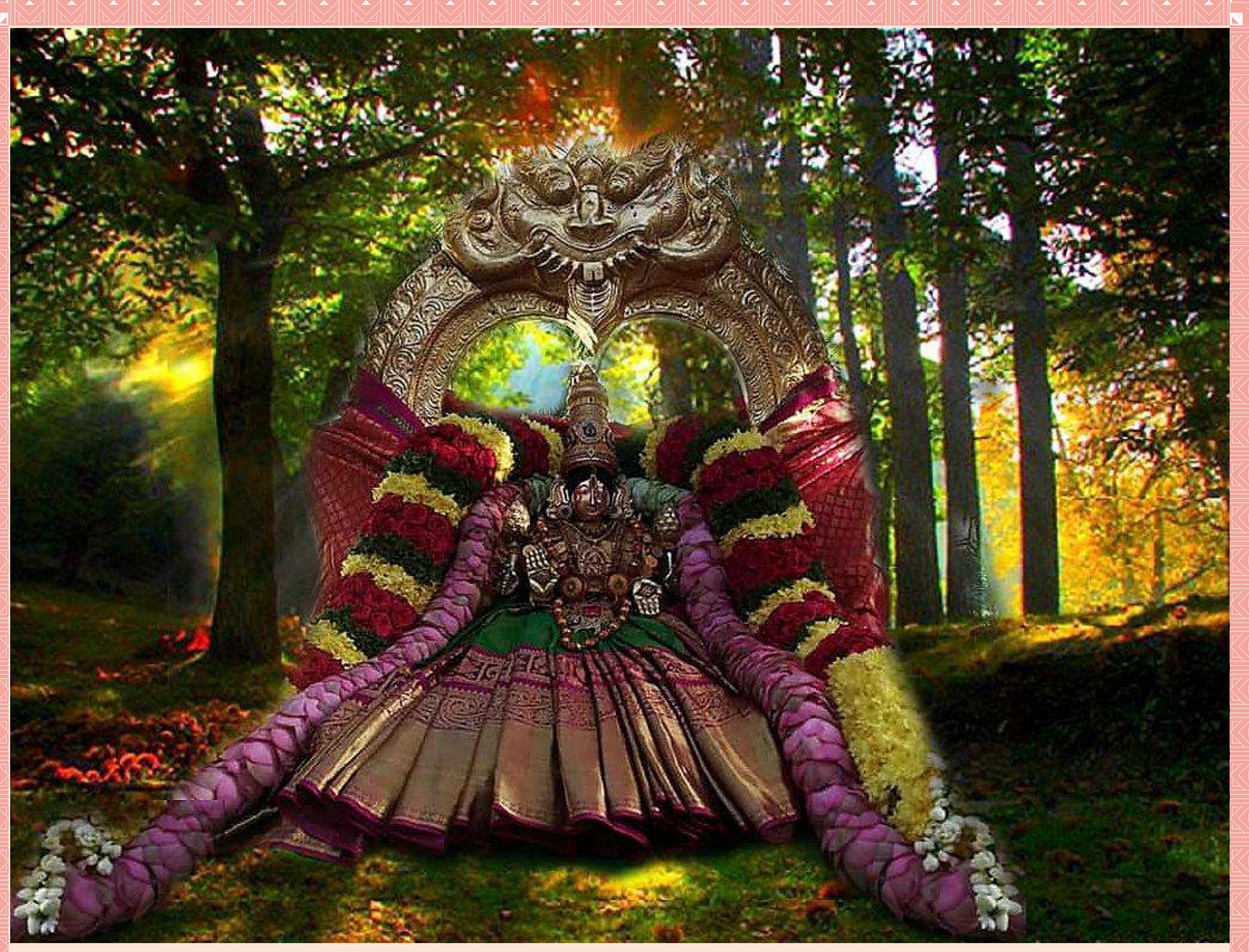
अतिलङ्घित शासनेष्वभीक्ष्णं वृषशैलाधिपतिर्विजृम्भितोष्मा ।
पुनरेव दये क्षमा निदानैः भवतीमाद्रियते भवत्यधीनैः ॥ २७.

atila~Nghita shAsaneShvabhIkShNaM
vR^iShashailAdhipatirvijR^imbhitoShmaa|
punareva daye kShamA nidAnaiH
bhavatIM Adrayate bhavatya dhInaiH||27



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Daya Devi is the sworn enemy of our sins and thus rids us of them. In the previous verse, Svami Desikan's poetic genius was in full view. In this verse, his mastery over tarka shastra (logic) becomes evident. While protecting someone, it is not merely that individual that is being safeguarded but also all his near and dear ones. When a prayer is submitted to Lord Srinivasa for protection, it is not merely for oneself but also for all those who have sought refuge in the seeker. This is especially true of Acharyas when they make the appeal to Lord Srinivasa. If it is merely protecting the supplicant, without near and dear ones such protection becomes incomplete and not fulfilling. In the present instance Daya Devi no doubt grants refuge to all sharaNAgatAs, who resort to Her feet. However, the sin-pile of the sharaNAgatAs that have "sought refuge" in the sharaNAgatAs is ruthlessly destroyed! How then can such protection deemed to be complete? Here is where one needs to resort to tarka shastram. This has been commented upon in great detail by several scholars. It must be remembered that Daya Devi performs the dual function of destroying the sin-pile of Her sharanagatas rendering them fitting receptacles for the Lord's grace and at the same time when the Lord is angered, She ensures that He returns to His becalmed state within moments. In common parlance, anger is never good. It has a deleterious impact on one's health on account of increasing tension, blood pressure and the like. kruddho hanyAt gurUnapi is the statement which reflects the fact that in a state of anger one would disregard one's own guru and speak of them in base terms and go to the extent of even killing their own guru. Therefore, this anger is like an infection which causes fever, which definitely needs to be mitigated.



Daya Devi will unfailingly protect Her beloved children!

If one becomes angry, near and dear ones immediately take action to reduce the anger and becalm the individual. In a like manner, when the Lord is angered, Daya Devi by Her persuasion restores the Lord to His calm state. Common folks are angered when they do not get what they desire or beget something undesired. This can also be caused when others don't heed one's advice and act in a manner contrary to the advice. The Lord's anger comes about when His commands are violated. What are these commands? shruti smriti mamaiva aj~nyA yastAm ullanghya vartate aj~nyA cChedi mama drohi mat bhaktopi na vaiShNavaH is the statement which documents this fact. For example, instead of acting in conformance with the declaration mAtru devo bhava pitru devo bhava, if one engages in a myriad other kaimkaryams such as constructing lakes and providing amenities for pilgrims it is a violation of the Lord's command which is sure to anger Him. In another instance if one is an egregious violator of the command satyam vada dharmam cara by uttering innumerable lies but fastidiously performs snAnam

at prescribed times with a claim to being pure it is sure to incur the wrath of the Lord. Thus, those who violate the Lord's commands definitely incur His displeasure causing Him to become angry. Azhvar prabandham declares

sUtanAi kaLvanAkit tUrttarODu isainta kAlam

mAtarAr kayal kaN ennum valaiyuL paTTu azhuntuvEnai

pOtarE enRu solli puntiyuL pukuntu tanpAl

Ataram peruka vaitta azhakan uR arangam anRE

We have been associating with those whose company is forbidden, we engage in stealing (here it needs to be understood that the Azhvar is referring to the Atma as the stolen wealth - namely regarding the Lord's possession as one's own). In this manner we engage in numerous forbidden acts. However, the merciful Lord Ranganatha despite these acts confers His grace on us declares Thondaradippodi Azhvar, while glorifying the mahimA (greatness) of Sriranga Kshetram. The Azhvar further laments "neither is my mind pure nor does my tongue speak good words". Since these are transgressions of the Lord's commands, they are bound to anger the Lord. Svami Desikan in the sharaNAgati dIpikA affirms

kartavyamityanukalaM kalayAmyakR^ityaM

svAminnakR^ityamiti kR^ityamapi tyajAmi|

anyadvayatikramaNajAtamanantamartha-

sthAne dayA bhavatu te mayi sArvabhaumI ||

Svami Bhashyakarar also alludes to these sentiments in the gadya trayam salutation "akR^itya karaNa kR^ityAkaraNa bhagavadapacAra bhAgavatApacAra asahyApacAra rUpa nAnAvidhAnantApacArAn ArabdhakAryAn anArabdhakAryAn…." akR^itya karaNa is the first among them, denoting the performance of those acts forbidden by the Shastras. kR^ityAkaraNa is the practice of not performing the acts prescribed by the shastras. These denote increasing degrees of apacharam. Not performing the prescribed acts is a greater offense than engaging in forbidden acts. This of course is trumped by Bhagavad apacharam and Bhagavata apacharam. If one engages in forbidden acts but at least performs the

prescribed acts as per the shastras, one could excuse the forbidden act. However, if one gives up the prescribed acts and engages in forbidden acts, the graveness of the offense is compounded. Svami Desikan refers to these acts in the above sharaNAgati dIpikA salutation. The import of this verse is that "I engage in acts that are forbidden almost in the manner of a prescribed duty and thus become a most egregious violator of the Lord's command. Oh Svami! I readily give up the prescribed acts. For example, if a young boy is routinely performing trikAla sandhyAvandanam, one day when engaged in studying for his exams if he is advised to give up the sandhyAvandanam for that day using the examination readiness as a pretext, it comes under the category of svAminnakR^ityamiti kR^ityamapi tyajAmi. In this manner I readily give up all my prescribed duties. The sins that accrue from such acts can only be destroyed by the Lord's Daya." The reason for the Lord's anger is described in this verse through the salutation atila~Nghita shAsaneShvabhIkShNaM. Here the reference is to a repeated violation of the Lord's commands as opposed to a one-time occurrence. It must be noted that the Lord is not angered easily. He affords everyone a long rope. Only when the threshold is breached does the Lord's anger spring forth. For example, if one engages in a sinful activity mere expression of sincere regret for the transgression reduces the severity of the consequence (25% reduction). Resolving not to commit the offence again further reduces the harsh consequences by another 25%. Commencing expiatory acts reduces the consequences of the sins by another 25% and finally all consequences are nullified upon successful completion of the expiatory acts. In this manner if one approaches akR^itya karaNam kR^ityAkaraNam, the Lord would be favorably disposed towards the supplicant and willing to confer His grace. However, if one engages in repeat violations and justifies these acts, they are bound to incur the Lord's anger. For example, even if one constructs numerous temples and conducts several utsavams on a grand scale while not performing the prescribed duty of trikala sandhyAvandanam it is useless in keeping with the declaration "aj~nyA cChedi mama drohi" In a like manner repeat offenders are regarded as traitors by the Lord and even if they call themselves Bhaktas of the Lord they are not VaishNavas is the import of the Lord's declaration. Such transgressions therefore anger the Lord beyond measure causing Him to swoon. When one is having high fever, it is customary to place a wet cloth on the individual's forehead. In a like manner Daya Devi goes about the task of reviving the Lord and bringing him back to his becalmed state. punareva daye kShamA nidAnaiH bhavatIM Adrayate bhavatya dhInaiH is the salutation that describes this fact. This refers to the fact that Daya Devi ensures that the supplicant

first gains Acharya Sambandham, expresses regret for all the transgressions committed thus far promising not to engage in them anymore, performs sharaNAgati and gives up all claim to the Atma by offering it as a samarpaNam to the Lord. No doubt this destroys all the sinful acts committed by the supplicant. However, what about the offenses that can accrue after sharaNAgati? Daya Devi ensures that the supplicant seeks prayaschitta sharaNAgati. In this manner Daya Devi ensures that the Lord's anger is completely removed, which becomes a major upakAram for the Lord. Here an important message from Srimad Ramayanam comes through. vadhArhamapi kAkutstha kRipayA paryapAlayaH is the salutation that becomes relevant. KakAsura engaged in apachAram not towards the Lord but towards ThAyAr. This becomes intolerable for the Lord. Even the killing of RAvaNa was undertaken only on account of apachAram towards ThAyAr rather than PerumAL. This being the case, Lord Rama had resolved to destroy KakAsura. However, Daya Devi came to the rescue of KakAsura. Therefore, it must be remembered that even if one is fit for the death sentence at the Lord's hands, Daya Devi will unfailingly protect the supplicant. This does not grant the license to engage in acts that displease the Lord. It is merely an illustration of the glory of Daya Devi, who rescues supplicants from the gravest of offenses.

Svami Alavandar in the Stotra Ratnam declares:

na ninditaM karma tadAsti loke

sahasrasho yanna mayA vyadhAyi |

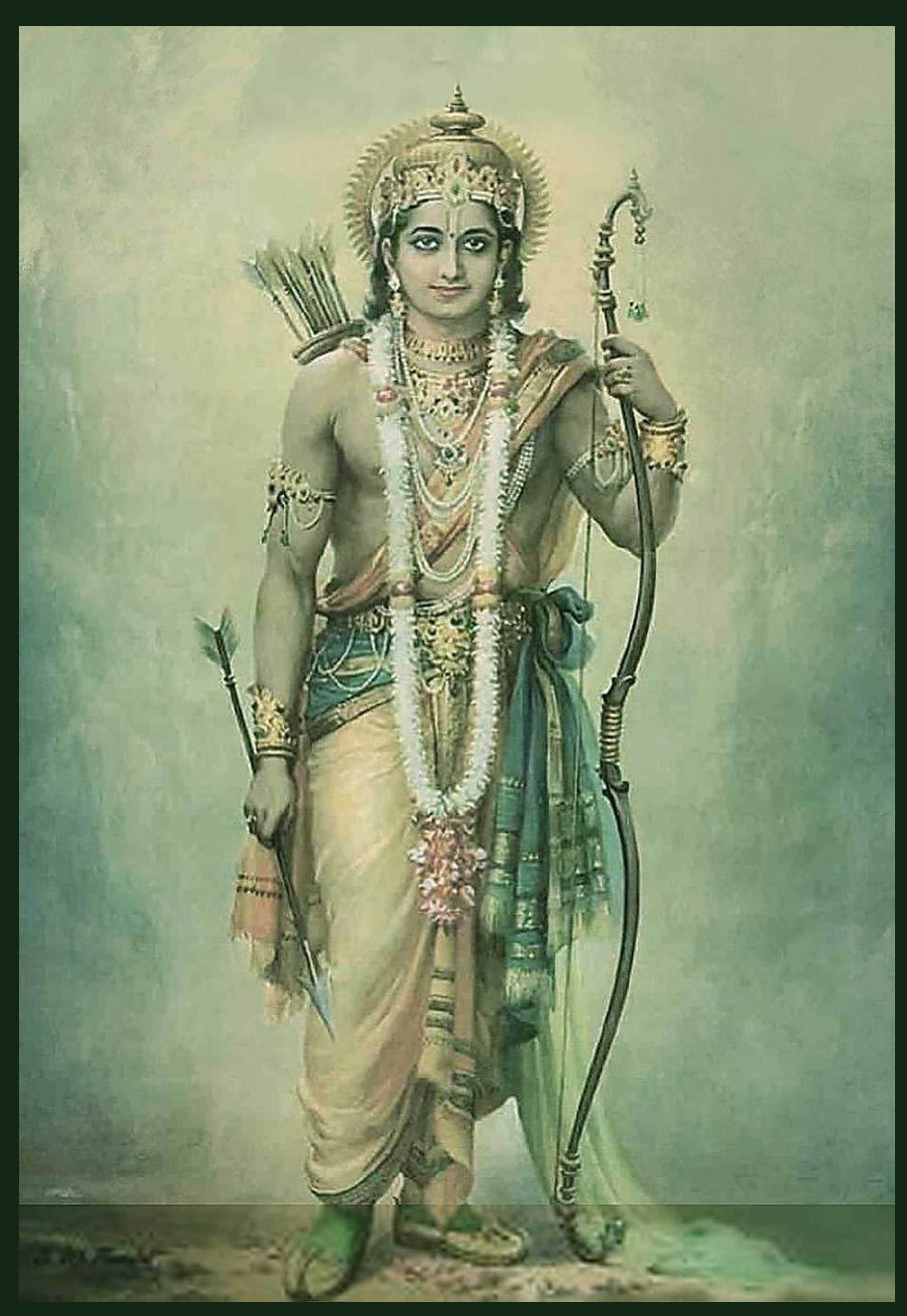
so(a)haM vipAkAvasare mukunda

krandAmi saMpratyagatistavAgre||

Svami Alavandar laments that he has engaged in countless violations of the shastras over a long period for which he has no other recourse than express anguish and resort to the feet of Mukunda submitting this impassioned appeal. In the case of Daya Devi one can be assured that one need not cry endlessly as described by Svami Alavandar. Daya Devi will immediately come to the rescue of the supplicant and ensure that he is graced by Lord Srinivasa.

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri. U. Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"We people indulge in Shastra violation quite freely; we might transgress the Lord's mandates even a thousand times and more. He becomes infuriated; He burns in anger. It is at this juncture, a sea-change occurs, thanks to You, oh Daya Devi!



karuNA kAkutstha

You alone can do it. You induce one to turn over a new leaf; take serious note of some rare accidental punya act and feel You ought to help him; goad him to do more good acts; if he fulfills these requisites You even induce him to perform Prapatti; if he had already chanced to have surrendered at an Acharya's feet, You now prompt him to undertake a second surrender act as Prayaschitta Prapatti if no other expiation mode is available. In this manner You help everyone. Distinctions vanish. All such people are destined to receive the Lord's forgiveness and reach Him. The Lord is pleased; He is thankful to You. He favors Your approach, Your efforts, and Your redeeming achievements.

The Lord and Daya Devi in particular, long to redeem all people; long to help all attain eternal Bliss. However, incorrigible we may be, they - especially Daya Devi intervenes on our behalf at every stage. This world misses the message unfortunately."



Slokam 28

करुणे दुरितेषु मामकेषु प्रतिकारान्तर दुर्जयेषु खिन्नः ।

कवचायितया त्वयैव शार्ङ्गी विजयस्थानं उपाश्रितो वृषाद्रिम् ॥ २८ ॥

karuNe duriteShu mAmakeShu pratikArAntara durjayeShu khinnaH|

kavachAyitayA tvayaiva shAr~NgI vijayasthAnaM upAshrito vR^iShAdrim||28



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "The previous verse highlighted the role of Daya Devi in mitigating the Lord's anger as well as Her role in rescuing Kakasura, who committed the grave apacharam towards Thayar. Now we focus on the upakaram rendered by Daya Devi to Lord Srinivasa, when He encounters difficulty. At a first glance this seems quite jarring since the Lord is characterized by the guNams of vishoka (one who knows no sorrow), vijaraH (one who is ageless), vimR^ityuH (one who has no death) apahatapApma (one to whom no sin is attached). Not only this but also those who surrender unto the Lord and attain Parama Padam do not encounter any sorrow and are steeped in eternal bliss. When this is the case, how could the Lord have difficulty? Svami Desikan addresses this here. When it comes to common people, a couple (husband and wife) need to hang together in times of trouble. However, many times one may encounter an extremely affectionate wife as long as she is enjoying the husband's riches but when the man encounters troubled times and loses his wealth she begins to despise him and perhaps desert him. In this instance we examine whether Daya Devi remains by the Lord's side during His demanding times or leaves Him to struggle. Here the difficulty for the Lord is in a battle. In this battle the Lord is sure to lose. However, Daya Devi comes to His rescue and ensures that He remains victorious. Another question that arises is that can there be a battle with the Lord? The answer is most definitely yes. This can arise in many forms due to a plethora of reasons. For example, there can be territorial disputes among kings, disagreements between husband and wife resulting in a fight. On the other hand, if one resolves to do something but is prohibited in executing this task by an another it could result in a fight. When it comes to Lord Srinivasa, His desire is to rid all sentients in the universe of their mountainous sin-pile. However, He is unable to rid them of this. Thus, it becomes a battle between the mountainous sin-pile of a large number of sentient beings and the Lord. It is important to note here that Svami Desikan includes himself among those sentients in mood of naichyam

(intense self-deprecation) although he led a blemishless life. On the other hand, this is meant to take on the plight of commoners and submit the appeal to Daya Devi. karuNe duriteShu mAmakeShu pratikArAntara durjayeShu khinnaH is the salutation from this verse which describes the battle between Svami Desikan's sins and the Lord. If it is a single sin, the Lord can easily mete out punishment by making the individual endure its consequence and the Lord emerges victorious. However, in the process of meting out punishment, additional sins accrue to the individual. The growth of these sins is exponential that it leaves the Lord handcuffed while carrying out His task of punishment. How long can the Lord after all continue to engage in this task? Therefore, the Lord himself is at a loss to bring an end to this battle and emerge victorious. In Srimad Ramayanam, during the Rama Ravana battle, Rama was either by Himself on the battlefield or staying up on Hanuman's shoulder to fight His war with Ravana. Beholding this, Indra thought it was inappropriate for Lord Rama to fight thus and hence sent his chariot along with the charioteer, Matali. The battle between Rama and Ravana was so intense that there can be no similes to describe it in the keeping with the statement "gaganam gaganAcara sAgara sAgaro mahAn". The clouds remain clouds, while the ocean remains the ocean is the import of this statement. One cannot mistake the cloud for an ocean or vice-versa. Lord Rama tried to cut off the heads of Ravana. However, each time He cut off a head another took its place. Thus, it was an exercise in futility. In a like manner, when the Lord is in the act of meting out punishment for sins, before He successfully carries out His task for a given sin, another accrues and so on leading to an infinite loop with no termination. This causes Lord Srinivasa great pain and anguish making His heart heavy with grief. It is impossible for commoners to engage in a battle with the Lord. Great personages of the sampradayam like Sri Parasara Bhattar and Svami Alavandar have engaged in this exercise. In verse 63 of the Stotra ratnam Svami Alavandar states:

raghuvara yadhabhUstvaM tAdR^isho vAyasasya

praNata iti dayALuryacca caidyasya kR^iShNa|

pratibhavamaparaddhurmugdha sayujyado bhUH

vada kimapadamAgastasya testi kShamAyAH

The import of this verse is that "Besides you I have no other recourse." However, the Lord remains silent to Svami Alavandar's plea. Then Svami Alavandar wonders whether the Lord is remaining silent due to the enormous sin-pile accrued by him.

For example, if one approaches an elder and demands something which is refused by the elder on account of the fact that the youngster does not deserve this because he has committed grave crimes, it is common for the youngster to ask, here is another who has committed just as grave crimes as me but you chose him over me. Why is he special? In a like manner Svami Alavandar demands of the Lord that "in the Rama Avataram, Kakasura committed an unpardonable crime towards Thayar. Are my offenses as grave? In the Krishna Avataram, Shishupala engaged in a litany of abuse towards the Lord. Did I do anything similar? These individuals received Your viseSha anugraham (even though it may seem that You were punishing them) - In Kakasura's case reducing the death sentence to eliminating his eye while in the case of Shishupala conferring upon him the kaimkarya bliss pervading in Sri Vaikuntam. Why am I left behind and not privy to Your grace?" is Svami Alavandar's concluding argument. Sri Parasara Bhattar enquires of Lord Ranganatha after his Tirumanjana snanam, when Lord Ranganatha is adorned with Tulasi garland during the IravaDai sevai. The two-hour long Tirumanjanam for Lord Ranganatha is a sight to behold with upacharams being submitted to the Lord with careful attention to detail. One would not even realize the passage of time and can get this only on account of koTi janma sukR^itam (the good deeds accumulated over millions of births). The ghee lamp is lit after Trimanjanam for Lord Ranganatha to provide a splendorous view for all. Lord Ranganatha was extremely pleased with the upacharams submitted by Sri Parasara Bhattar. There followed a most intense dialog between the Lord Ranganatha (LR) and Sri Parasara Bhattar (PB) which is reported below.

LR: tvam me (you belong to me)

PB: What? Who says so? "aham me" (I belong to me alone)

LR: kutastat? (How so?) You are subservient to me. That being the case, how can you claim to belong to anyone else?

PB: tadapi kutaH (Please tell me on what basis You declare that I am subservient to You. Then I shall answer You). This is the familiar tactic of turning the question on the questioner.

LR: vedamUla pramANAt. Due to numerous pramANams rooted in the Vedam, smR^itis and the like as well as statements of the nature "dAsabhUtAH svatassarve hyAtmAna paramAtmanaH atohamapi te dAsaH itimatvA namAmyaham"



NamperumAL – Thirumanjana sevai

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PB: etat sthAnadi siddhAt anubhava vibhavAt. You have quoted the Veda pramANams to support Your claim. However, let me say that pratyakSham (experience in person) is more valuable than the pramANams that You quote. I have taken numerous births and, in each birth, I have held the firm belief that I belong to myself alone and none other. Therefore, is it possible to reverse this long held belief? Hence, I do not belong to You. anubhava vibhavAt. My experience has not taught me anything to the effect that I belong to You. Therefore, how can I accept Your word?

LR: tarhi sAkrosha eva. What one is experiencing is valid as pramaNam only as long as it is not countered by another. If this happens one's experience can never be a pramANam. For example, from a distance a hanging rope can easily be mistaken for a snake. This may be valid as long as someone familiar with the scenario comes by and instructs that this is a mere rope and not a

snake thereby invalidating the initial premise. In a like manner your claim of belonging to yourself alone is easily refuted.

PB: kvAkroshaH kasya? (Who says so?)

LR: gItAadiShu mama viditaH In the Bhagavad Gita

PB: ko atra sAkShI? (who is the witness to this?)

LR: sudhIH syAt. Great sages like Veda Vyasa, Suka Bramham and the like

PB: hanta tvatpakshapAtI (This is great! All of them are Your votaries and therefore naturally sing Your praise). Hence, this is totally unacceptable.

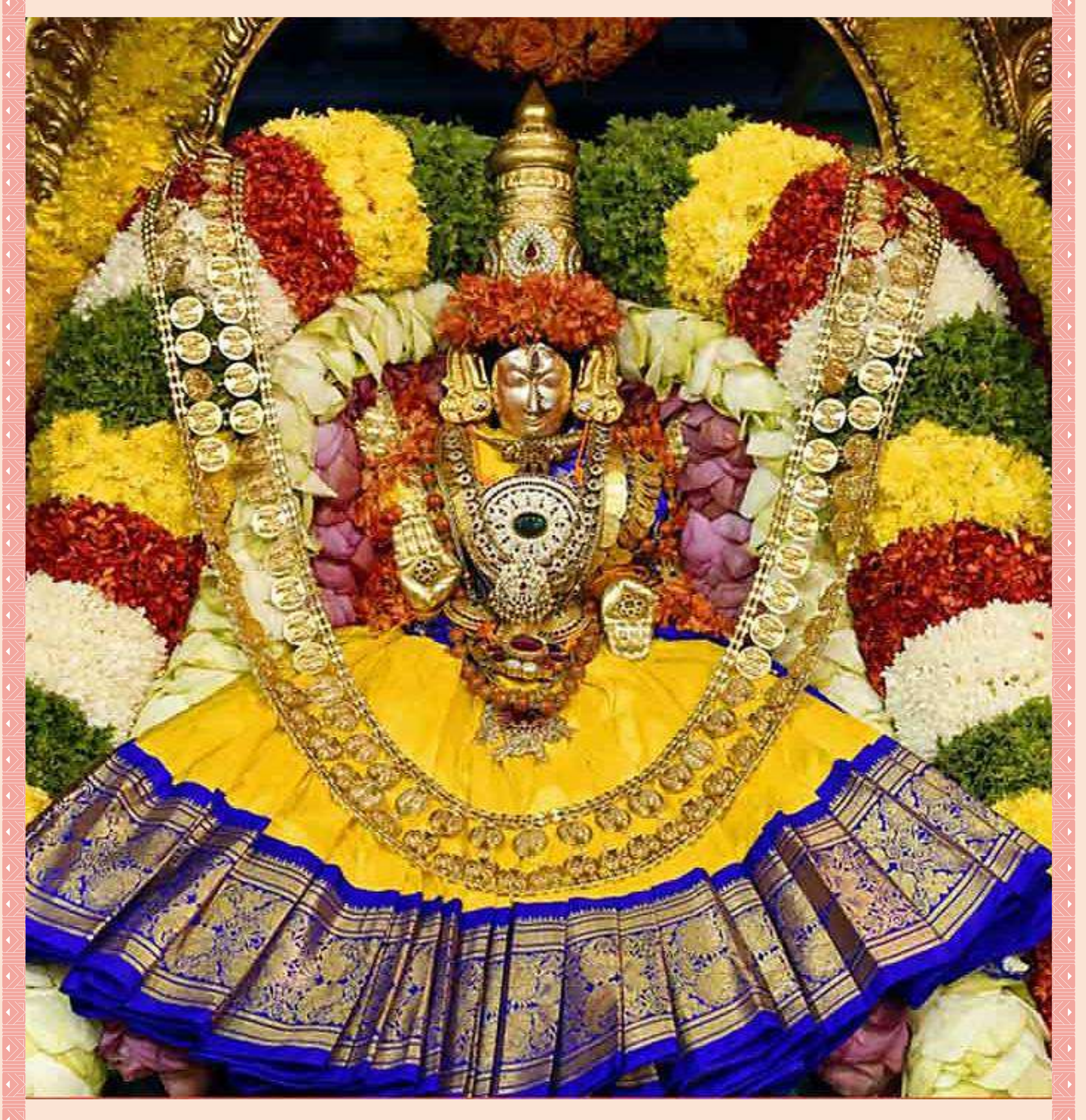
Lord Ranganatha is at a loss for words and wonders what will convince Sri PB.

In battles such as these with pre-eminent Acharyas, if the Lord loses, He is most gracious in accepting His defeat. However, when it comes to the sin-pile of commoners, the Lord is aghast that He would encounter defeat. While He is at a loss for what to do in this instance, Daya Devi steps in and declares, "It is after all the battle with this sin-pile. I shall take care of this and ensure that you are undefeated". This is an adbhuta rakShaNam (astonishing protection) for Lord Srinivasa as declared in the next part of the verse "kavachAyitayA tvayaiva shAr~NgI". The rakshaNam comes about in the form of a protective armour (kavacham of Daya Devi). When the Lord heads to the battlefield, He has all of His weapons, which are potent no doubt. However, they pale in comparison to this kavacham known as Daya Devi. How so? Only when one is well protected can he engage in the task of destroying his enemies. If he is incapable of protecting himself, how can the enemies be destroyed? In this instance Daya Devi transforms Herself into the protective armour for Lord Srinivasa to ensure that His divya mangala vigraha svarUpam is preserved. In the Mahabharata war the killing of Abhimanyu took place when Arjuna was at a considerable distance. But hearing the celebratory cries of the Kauravas, Arjuna realized that Abhimanyu had been killed and was greatly distressed by this fact. The grief morphed into a terrible anger on account of which Arjuna resolved to kill the one responsible for Abhimanyu's death the very next day or else give up his life through agni pravesham. Duryodhana upon hearing about this oath resolved that if Arjuna gives up his life the remaining Pandavas will not continue the fight, and this can bring a swift end to the war. Therefore, as long as he ensured that Jayadhratha (who was the one who killed Abhimanyu) was kept fortified for the whole next day from Arjuna's view, the battle can be easily ended. When the war resumed the next day Arjuna first encountered



Daya Devi is His Kavacham

Drona and the prospect for a long-drawn battle was on. However, Arjuna realizing that time was of the essence, saluted Drona and sought his blessings to move on. Drona accordingly consented. Beholding this Duryodhana was quite angered and engaged in a war of words with Drona remonstrating to the effect that “Even though you are on my side you seem to favor the Pandavas over me” Drona replied that when his disciple sought his blessings to move forward, he had no choice in the matter. He then said to Duryodhana. “I shall give you a special armour which will be impregnable. You proceed to fight with Arjuna armed with this.” Duryodhana challenged Arjuna to a fight and no matter how powerful the arrows used by Arjuna, they would harmlessly bounce off of Duryodhana and fall to the ground. Lord Krishna immediately realized that Drona had bestowed a protective armour to Duryodhana and instructed Arjuna to aim his arrows at those parts of Duryodhana’s



vijayasthAnaM upAshrito vR^iShAdrim

body that were not covered by the armour - in this case the fingernails. Only Arjuna was capable of aiming his sharp arrows with precision at the fingernails. Unable to

withstand the pain Duryodhana retreated. This instance is to highlight the efficacy of the Kavacham. Now for the task of protecting Lord Srinivasa in His war against the sin-pile, Daya Devi transforms Herself into a protective armour. It is intended to safeguard the Lord's divyamangala vigraham. He is known as parama kAruNyan. However, if He begets vaiShamya dosham due to diversity in qualities it is unacceptable. Therefore, Daya Devi ensures that this does not come about. It may be remembered that Daya Devi is ruthless when it comes to destroying the sin-pile. By providing the armour to Lord Srinivasa, She ensures that the Lord is victorious. vijayasthAnaM upAshrito vR^iShAdrim is the salutation from this verse which glorifies this fact. Here a question may arise in that did the Lord emerge victorious or beat a hasty retreat like Duryodhana? Swami Desikan answers this unambiguously by stating that the moment Lord Srinivasa is adorned with the armour of Daya Devi his victory is assured. The question of where does this take place is answered through the salutation vijayasthAnaM upAshrito vR^iShAdrim.The place of Victory is vR^iShAdrim - the hill where VrishabhAsura was killed. The Venkatam hill acquires its name from the fact that it is a combination of the terms vEm (sins) and kaTa (destroy). Thus, it is a place where all sins are destroyed like moths in the fire. Lord Srinivasa with the armour known as Daya Devi has taken root here and therefore, it is always a VijayasthAnam. Hence, the Lord knows no defeat. How so? Does this then mean that sins do not exist and people do not commit sins? How could this be declared as a victory? This is answered through the Slokam – "sandarshanAdakasmAnca pumsAm sammUDha cetasAm| kuvAsanA kubuddhishca kutarka nicayashca yaH|| kuhetushca kubhAvAshca nAstikatvam layam vrajet||" It is sufficient to have a darsanam of the divyamangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa once - that too by sheer accident. For example, a lady may be cleaning the premises of various places and happens to have the duty of cleaning the premises of the Tirumala Temple. While going about her task one day she looks up and beholds the magnificent sight of Lord Srinivasa. At that instant all ignorance, sins, base instincts, sins, and atheistic traits are destroyed. A single darsanam of Lord Srinivasa grants this benefit and therefore affirms the fact that VR^ishAdrim is His VijayasthAnam. This is the upakAram rendered by Daya Devi for Lord Srinivasa.

Svami Desikan then raises a rhetorical question? Everything documented so far highlights the role of Daya Devi in destroying the sin-pile and making the Venkatam Hill the vijayasthAnam for Lord Srinivasa. However, what if Daya Devi Herself is dumbfounded by the magnitude of the sin-pile and decides "that this individual is not worthy of My grace. Let Me move on to someone else" To ensure

that there is no discrimination of any kind, Svami Desikan documents the answer to this question in the next verse.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin. “Oh Karuna Devi! My sins are too many. They cannot be wished away as people in foolishness imagine. They have to be wiped out by deliberate planning of expiatory acts - prayAshcittAs.

Till they are exhausted, till we turn a new leaf, we merely offend Him. Indeed “our arrows” hit Him hard. He is pained. He necessarily wears a shield, figuratively Daya Devi. He is pained at heart. He grieves in this vein: “I have shown to these sentients what are good acts and what are forbidden. For transgressions, I have indicated in so many scriptures how to eliminate them through suitable expiatory acts. Yet they do not mend their ways. They merely visit My shrine and imagine that they will thereby deserve total pardon”. But then it is His victory post; His VijayasthAnam. He wins over all sentients due to Daya Devi’s help. Once the sentients are won over they turn a new leaf. They can win their deliverance.

1. The scriptures declare that our visit to shrines have this redeeming effect; our atheistic and non-dharmic tendencies vanish. Here the reference is to the fact that on account of Daya Devi’s help the same occurs to the millions who throng every day to the abode of Lord Srinivasa.

2. An imaginary duel, a war of words is presented in a verse, by Sri Parasara Bhattar (tvam me aham me). In a similar war of swords and arrows, we offend the Lord every moment. Ultimately, we meet our Waterloo at the Tirumalai Hill. Please note the use of Waterloo is an extremely poor description and does no justice to the grandeur and majesty of the Tirumala Hills the VijayasthAnam of Lord Srinivasa. The Lord wins us. Daya Devi helps Him. We shall hereafter not offend Him by our sins, by our arrows and by our importunate refusal to perform atoning rituals.”



Slokam 29

मयि तिष्ठति दुष्कृतां प्रधाने मितदोषानितरान् विचिन्वती त्वम् ।
अपराधगणैरपूर्णकुक्षिः कमला कान्त दये कथं भवित्री ॥ २९ ॥

mayi tiShThati duShkR^itAM pradhAne mitadoShAn itarAn vichinvatI tvam|
aparAdhagaNaiH apUrNakukShiH kamalA kAnta daye kathaM bhavitrI||29



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

Here again Svami Desikan's poetic genius comes to the fore. The sambodhanam here is kamalA kAnta daye - namely the Daya of the husband of Kamala, who is not separated from Her for even a moment. It may be important to recall Svami Nammazhvar's Saranagati where he declares akala illEn iRaiyum enRu AlarmElmangai uRai mArbA reflecting the inseparability of Thayar from Perumal. It must also be borne in mind that Svami Desikan has given the Daya Gunam the form of one of the consorts of the Lord for the purpose of bringing out Her glory in this stotram. She is in the company of the Lord in this instance and is wondering what would be suitable food for her to consume. After observing vratams such as Sri Jayanthi the munitrayam tradition requires maintaining a fast. This is naturally tiring and creates a longing for food at the first opportunity after the Vratam is completed. Daya Devi's state is similar. While She seeks out suitable food to consume everything She beholds seems to not even amount to a single morsel. What can cause Her hunger? It must be remembered that Her essential nature is one of "para duHkha nirAkaraNa icCha." (the desire to rid others of their sorrows). This is the reason for Her hunger. Here Svami Desikan notes that trivial acts on the part of Daya Devi in ridding people of their minor sorrows is insufficient. The destruction of sins, which cause sorrow to Her supplicants, serves as food for Daya Devi. In this process, Daya Devi becomes extremely hungry and is looking for an appropriate serving of food. Will this be satisfied if She destroys the sins of a handful of Her seekers? Beholding this Svami Desikan declares in this verse "mayi tiShThati duShkR^itAM pradhAne mitadoShAn itarAn vichinvatI tvam" For Bhaktas, the darshan of the Divyamangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa serves as pAraNai (consumption of food following a fast). According to the Azhvar "uNNA nAL pasiyAvatu onRillai" namely if we are deprived of Bhagavan's Darsanam or dhyAnam even for a day, it becomes a day of starvation - a day wasted. It is not the

days that one goes without food that count as a day of starvation. This highlights an important message from the Srivaishnava tradition in that mere fasting on Ekadasi day is insufficient. It needs to be accompanied by extolling the great deeds of Lord Narayana, enjoying His numerous auspicious qualities, singing His praises, or engaging in contemplation of the Lord. In fact these activities serve as food for the soul and thus render inconsequential the demands of food for the body. In this context it is worthwhile recalling Sri KurathAzhvan's mangalasasanam for Lord Varadaraja in Varadaraja Stavam:

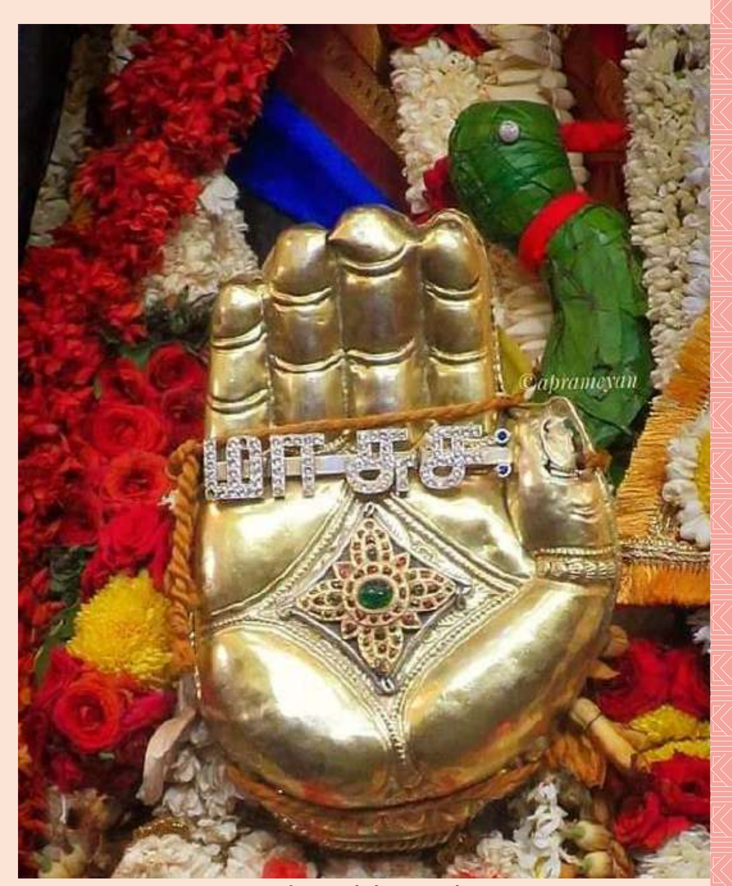
tvAmudArabhujamunnasamAyat

karNapAsha parikarmasadaMsam|

AyatAkShamabhijAtakapolaM

pAraNiyati varaprada! dR^ingme||

Upon beholding the arms of the Lord, Kuresha is astonished by the size of the Lord's Palms. These are huge on account of the fact that He graces all His seekers with everything they want. In this manner if every limb of the Lord (His eyes, ears, nose etc) is enjoyed, it becomes pAraNiyati varaprada! dR^ingme, namely a paraNai (partaking of food) after a three day fast. Now returning to the subject of Daya Devi's hunger, Svami Desikan enquires of Her - You seem to be going after the trifle sin-piles of others while ignoring me, who is the foremost among sinners and has an offering that will satiate Your hunger. Is this even fair? This is evidenced in the salutation duShkR^itAM pradhAnaiH


SrI Varadar abhaya hastam

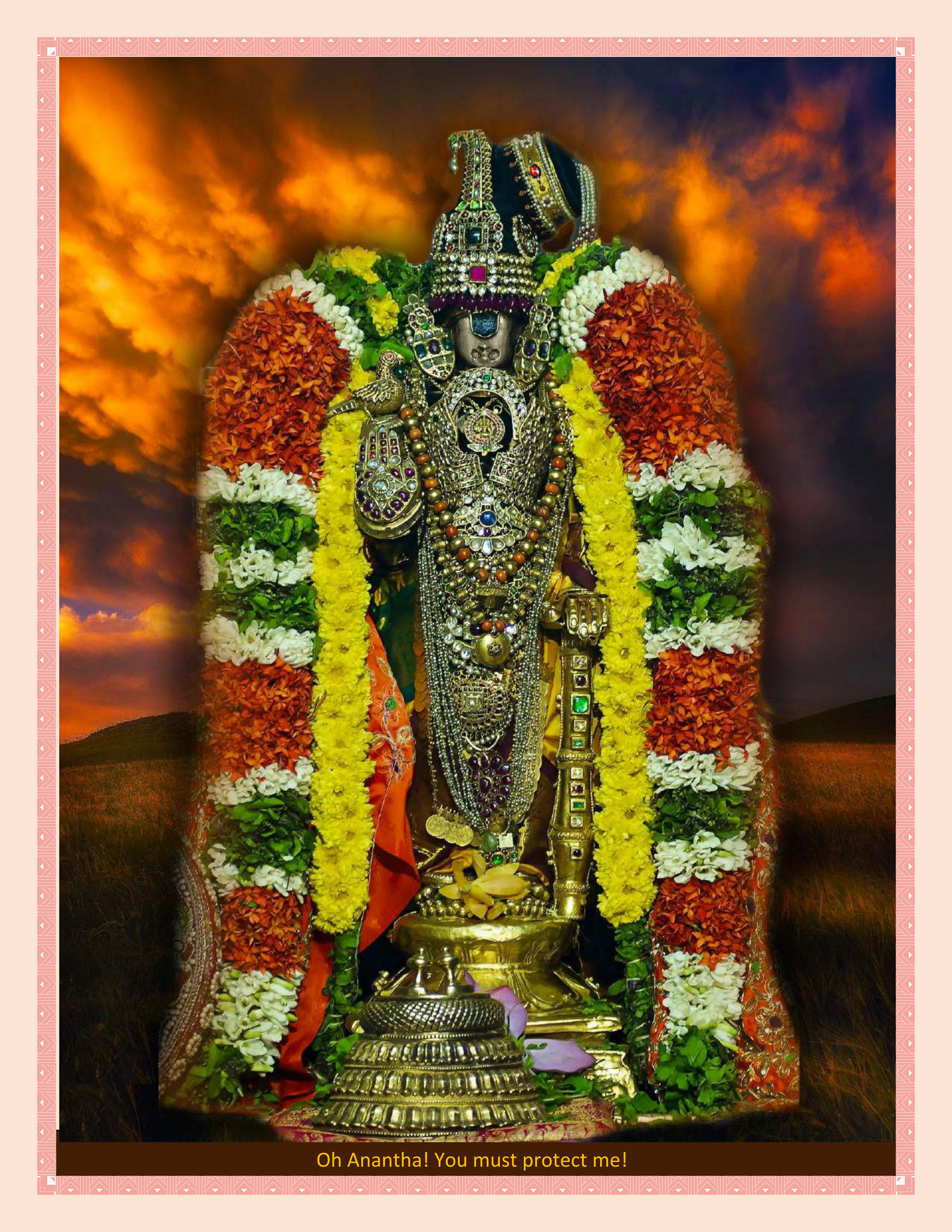
When it comes to naischyam, Svami Desikan follows in the footsteps of Svami Alavandar, who declares in the Stotraratnam:

nimajjato(a)nanta bhavArNavAntaH

cirAya me kUlamivAsi labdhaH

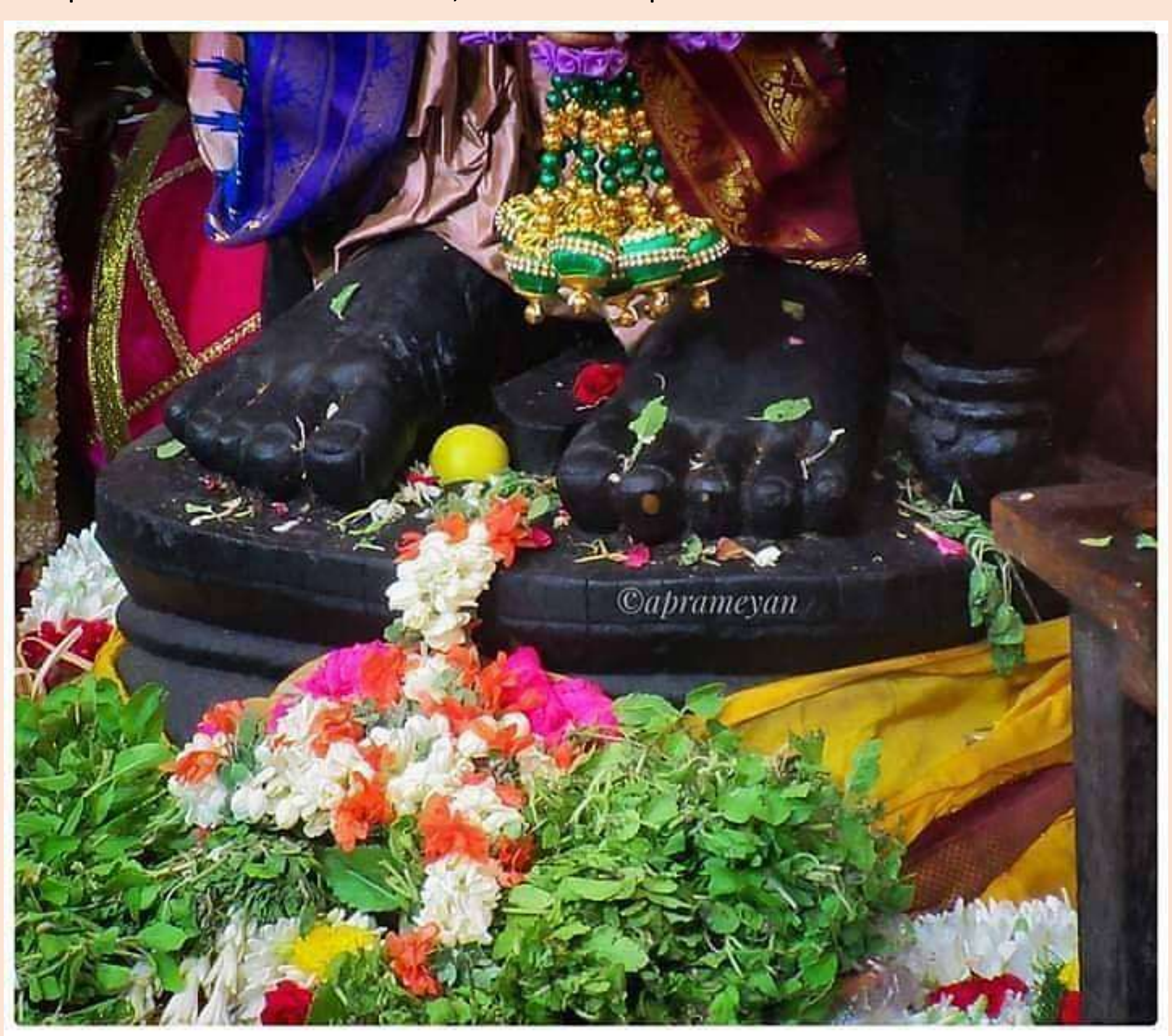
tvayApi labdhaM BhagavannidAnIm

anuttamaM pAtramidaM dayAyAH



Oh Anantha! You must protect me!

The import of this verse is: “Oh Anantha! If sins can be viewed as an ocean, I am constantly immersed in this ocean. I do not know how long this immersion has been taking place. While I am struggling thus, I have been blessed now to recognize that Your Feet represent the shoreline that I need to get to. I am not prepared to let go of this now that I have realized its value. However, you too need to be aware of an important fact. You too have been looking out for people to grace and only today You have found me as the most deserving receptacle. Thus, You must also accept this visesham. Therefore, You need to protect me.”



tvadIya caraNau sharaNaM prapadye
(SrI Atthi Varadar tiurvaDikaL)

Sri KurathAzhvan salutes Lord Varadaraja through the following verse in AtimAnusha stavam:

adyApi nAsti uparatiH trividhApacarAt

pApaH pare nipatito(a)smi tamasya pAre|

etAtdR^isho(a)hamagatiH bhavato dayAyAH

pAtraM tvadIya caraNau sharaNaM prapadye||

The import of this verse is: “You have resolved to confer Your grace. However, behold my plight. I have been engaged in endless Bhagavat-BhAgavata-AchArya apacharams for a time which knows no bounds. If I look to see whether there is even a stray pious act, I am unable to locate it amidst the sin-pile that has accrued. Only one in this state requires Your grace in good measure. Resolving thus, I surrender to Your feet.”

For example, there is a famous teacher who coaches bright students that perform extremely well on exams. There is not much fame or credit to the teacher since the students are inherently bright and the effort on the teacher’s part is minimal. On the other hand, when a struggling student, who constantly fails the exams arrives and the teacher is able to coach him to elevate the student to a high performer, it brings tremendous credit to the teacher. In a like manner Svami Desikan in this verse states that “Oh Lord Srinivasa it is insufficient if You grace the great Rishis, who have distinguished themselves on account of their austerity, and grant them Moksham. Behold my pitiable state. Only if You are able to redeem me does it bring You glory!” This is reflected in the statement “mayi tiShThati duShkR^itAM pradhAne mitadoShAn itarAn vichinvatI tvam. “If one examines the sins committed by others and those committed by me, my sins easily trump the former. Therefore, oh Daya Devi, the offering of sin-piles from others cannot satiate Your ravenous hunger.” siddhamannam parityajya bhikShamaTati durmatiH is a statement that needs to be understood in this context. The meaning of this statement is that evil minded ones give up well prepared food and seek alms elsewhere. Svami Desikan now asks of Daya Devi “I have the perfect offering of a mountainous sin-pile that can satiate Your hunger. However, You seem to discard this in favor of a few trivial offerings from others. Is this fair?” In the Devanayaka Panchasat Svami Desikan elucidates:

prahlAda gokula gajendra parIkShidAdyAH

trAtAstvaya nanu vipattiShu tAdR^ishIShu|

sarvaM tadekamaparaM mama rakShaNaM te

santolyatAM tridashanAyaka kiM garIyaH


I need to be protected by You every moment!(SrI Devanatha PerumAl, Thiruvahindrapuram)

The import of this verse is: “Prahlada, the residents of Gokulam, Gajendra, and Parikshit no doubt received Your protection. However, theirs was a one-time occurrence. I need to be protected by You every moment. The effort called for in protecting me far outweighs the effort in rescuing these others. Therefore, can there even be an equivalence between them and me, oh Devanayaka?.”

Oh Daya Devi! Please wipe out my sin-pile!

Returning to the Daya Shatakam verse, Svami Desikan addresses Daya Devi “If You give up this sumptuous offering from me for trivial offerings from others, You will remain hungry. When seen in the company of the Lord’s other consorts, You lose Your glory on account of looking famished from hunger. You can gain the Lord’s favor among His consorts only when You are well fed and looking strong. This is possible only if You accept my offering of sins and wipe them out.” kamalA kAnta daye kathaM bhavitrI is the salutation attesting to this fact. This is in the manner of a mother who has prepared delicious food coaxes and cajoles her children to partake of food prior to going out. However, the recalcitrant children refuse her plea and declare that we have to go out. We shall worry about eating somewhere or the other. Out of an abundance of concern and sheer desperation the mother chastises her children with a statement “I have done my utmost to get you to eat before going out. However, you do not want to listen. Therefore, do as you wish.” Svami Desikan’s appeal to Daya Devi needs to be viewed in this context namely he has submitted an appropriate offering to satisfy the voracious appetite of Daya Devi. However, if She rejects it, She is free to do as She Wishes! This gem of a thought which comes about from Svami Desikan needs

to be recited by all commoners reflecting upon the sin-pile that has accrued from time immemorial and submit a plea to Daya Devi for rescue.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

This is a plea uttered in abject humility. Oh Daya Devi! It is You, who helpfully devours the sins of beings that resort to You in surrender. That is, You in Your generosity eat away the sins of the sentients and render them eligible for the Lord's pardon. Now I stand before You. I am the greatest sinner. My sin collection alone would be sufficient to satisfy Your voracious appetite and appease Your hunger. What is the use of searching for sinners who are weak, incapable, imperfect? If You devour their sins, Your appetite is guaranteed to not be satisfied. You will then become weak, infirm, and unattractive, becoming an object of contempt even for Your co-consorts, Mahalakshmi and the like!. This is a prayer apt for repetition by us."



Slokam 30

अहमस्म्यपराध चक्रवर्ती करुणे त्वं च गुणेषु सार्वभौमि।
विदुषी स्थितिमीदृशीं स्वयं मां वृषशैलेश्वर पादसात्कुरु त्वम्॥ ३०॥

ahamasmi aparAdha chakravarthI
karuNe tvam ca guNeShu sArvabhaumi|
viduShI sthitimIdhR^ishIM svayaM mAM
vR^iSha shaileshvara pAdasAt kuru tvam|| 30



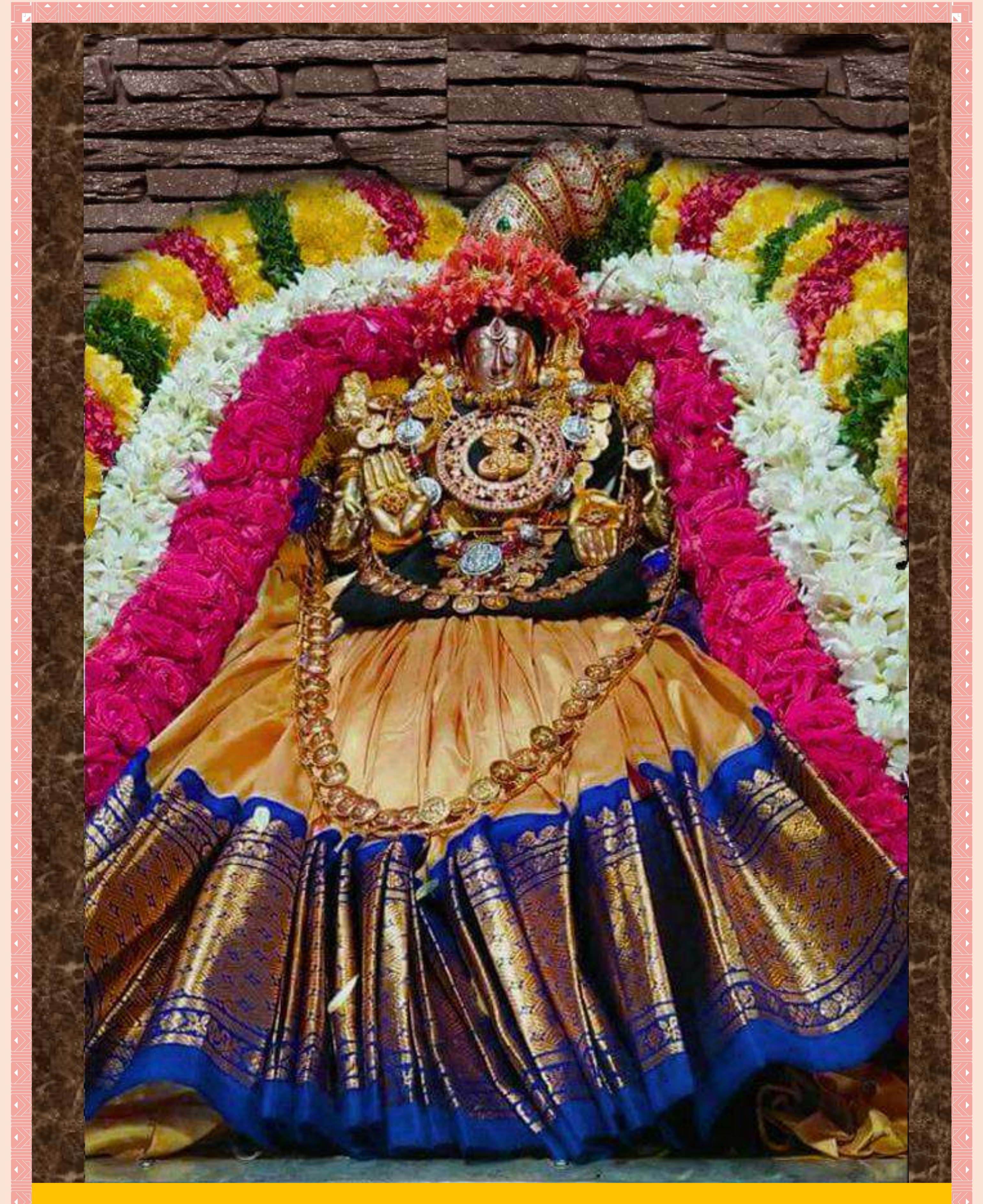
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "Daya Devi hears the appeal of Svami Desikan from the last verse and enquires of Svami "What do you desire?" Svami instantly springs forth with his reply "I only desire the Feet of Lord Srinivasa. Please help me get to this by Your persuasion." Daya Devi states that meetings can take place between people of equal status. Furthermore, there are protocols that need to be observed when it comes to an audience with Lord Srinivasa. There are numerous obstacles which cannot be surmounted easily declares Daya Devi. Svami Desikan responded to the concerns of Daya Devi with the statement "Do not worry about the status and protocols. I shall provide a way out for Your predicament." ahamasmi aparAdha chakravartI karuNe tvam ca guNeShu sArvabhaumi|viduShI sthitimIdhR^ishIM svayaM mAM vR^iSha shaileshvara pAdasAt kuru tvam is Svami Desikan's thundering answer. A common question that may arise in this context is that in the previous verse, Svami Desikan described himself to be the foremost among sinners. How could he possibly beget a status that is worthy of meeting the Lord? This question is answered in this verse. Svami Desikan declares his status to be "ahamasmi aparAdha chakravartI". The meaning of this declaration is "I am a king - not a mere king but an emperor." A king could have control over a small area of land however, an emperor controls vast territory and can have several vassal kings under him. This then gives rise to the question from Daya Devi. Svami has characterized himself as the foremost among sinners. How could he possibly be an emperor? Which kingdom? What subjects? Where? Svami Desikan answers this through the statement aparAdha chakravartI - namely he is the emperor of all aparAdhams. These aparAdhams are his subjects. Another interpretation is possible - aparAdha

chakravartI can also mean the emperor of those who are egregious violators of the Lord's commands (shruti smriti mamaiva aj~nyA yastAm ullanghya vartate).



The Empress of all auspicious qualities

Now that he described himself, Svami Desikan turns his attention to Daya Devi and eulogizes her as "karuNe tvam ca guNeShu sArvabhaumi" Oh Daya Devi! You are the empress of the Lord's innumerable auspicious qualities." It must be noted that the stature of the empress is greater than that of the emperor. Here a svArasyam needs to be observed in that the territory of the emperor far outsizes that of the empress. The Lord's auspicious qualities are innumerable no doubt and they are the subjects of Daya Devi's empire. However, Svami Desikan's poetic genius comes to the fore in that he declares that his mountainous sin-pile is so high that it dwarfs the empire of Daya Devi. Another point of note is that the aparAdhams merely contribute mass but not much substance. However, the auspicious qualities of the Lord are quite substantive and hence it can also mean that Daya Devi as the empress of these auspicious qualities trumps the emperor. By way of comparison, it may be helpful to ask the question which is greater being an emperor of a vast number of fools or being the empress of a wide array of intellectuals? Here it is important to note that a kingdom can have only one king. His word can then be followed as law. However, if two kings are in a kingdom, it is impossible to know whose word to follow. This is known as dvaIrAjya doSham. This is true even of families, where the man and wife have strong egos. Unless one of them gives into the will of the other, it will be impossible to run the family due to conflict of instructions. Svami Desikan then addresses Daya Devi and states that he has a way out of this dvairAjya doSham predicament as well. Specifically, he implores to Daya Devi "viduShI sthitimIdhR^ishIM svayaM mAM" nanely "Oh Daya Devi, You are well aware of my plight. Since You are the empress of intellectuals, and I am the emperor of a large number of dunces, it is very easy for You to conquer me. All I ask for is thus to be defeated by You, You need to hold me captive and render me at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa - vR^iSha shaileshvara pAdasAt kuru tvam. You need to bestow upon me the grace of Kaimkaryam to His Feet. Since You are the empress of intellectuals and I am the emperor of dunces, this is not at all a difficult task for You." Svami Desikan highlights an important message in this verse: One needs to be rid of one's sins and thus become empowered to render ceaseless kaimkaryam to the lotus Feet of Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi alone is capable of granting us this benefit. All of us need to wish for this sort of kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa's Feet and Bhakti for Lord Srinivasa facilitated by the grace of Daya Devi and most importantly revealed to us by Svami Desikan. Therefore, it would not be inappropriate to say that one must develop Bhakti towards Svami Desikan and submit this kaimkaryam request with folded hands to Svami Desikan himself since he is after all the avataram of Lord Srinivasa. This will result in all kshemams."



karuNe tvam ca guNeShu sArvabhaumi

Here it is helpful to recall the anubhavam of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan Svami from the PiraTTiyum PirAnum seitha upakAram upanyasam. “A meeting can take place only among equals. Lord Srinivasa is no doubt the emperor of the entire universe - akhilANDa koTi brahmANDa nAyakan. I am no less. I too am an emperor of aparAdhams. You, Oh Daya Devi! are the empress of all of the Lord’s auspicious qualities. Therefore, You are the fitting intermediary to ensure this meeting of equals.” Another interpretation of aparAdha chakravarthi can be seen from the fact that “I am constantly engaged in aparAdhams and therefore am inextricably caught in the aparAdha chakram. As a consequence, I am undergoing enormous suffering. You, Oh Daya Devi! are the empress of the Lord’s auspicious qualities. Please take note of my plight and rid me of my suffering by rendering me at the feet of Lord Srinivasa.” This also has implications in terms of the Atma being the property of the Lord and that the jivan is under the false impression that this belongs to him thus making it stolen property. A thief will not readily agree to his crime of theft. However, when he is caught red handed by a policeman who beats him up and throws him at the feet of a magistrate, the thief confesses to his crime. Svami Desikan in this verse appeals to Daya Devi: “Oh Daya Devi, I am the emperor of all aparAdhams! You need to subdue me by soundly thrashing me, tie me up, and throw me at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa. This alone will redeem me.” The inner meaning is that left to oneself one would not take recourse to the Lord. However, when the grace of Daya Devi falls upon the individual, he begets AchArya Sambandham as a result of which Bharanyasam is performed and the Acharya restores the Atma to its rightful owner, Lord Narayana. The lofty role of Daya Devi in this process is glorified.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin “Oh Daya Devi! Please behold my plight. I am the emperor of sins; even as You are the empress of the auspicious qualities of the Lord. You know very well the parity between both of us. The implication here is that none is more qualified for your intervention and compassion. Examine the compatibility between You and me.

It is very clear that You will, for Your own satisfaction, reform me and enslave me so that I will be a total servant of Lord Srinivasa.

1. The logic, tenor, and abject plea, will all have a deep impression on the devotee’s mind. We must develop the spirit of our learned Acharyas. Repetition of such verses should reform our hearts. If Svami Desikan declares that he is the emperor of sins, or rather the emperor of the sin-kingdom, so to say, we must learn

to reform ourselves. To abide by the Sastras, to live up to the sayings of the Holy Seers are our guides to winning the favor of Daya Devi

2. We are prolific in committing sins. All sins have to be duly expiated. When it becomes impossible, Prapatti is the only hope. Through Prapatti, we can secure the Lord's Daya. Both these steps - sin clearance by expiation or by Prapatti and Daya flow will lead us to Bhagavat Kaimkarya, which is Moksha. In this verse Svami Desikan appeals to Daya Devi to accept him as a Servant, Sesha bhUta, Kinkara etc. pAdasAt kuru is an idiomatic usage, meaning servile existence.







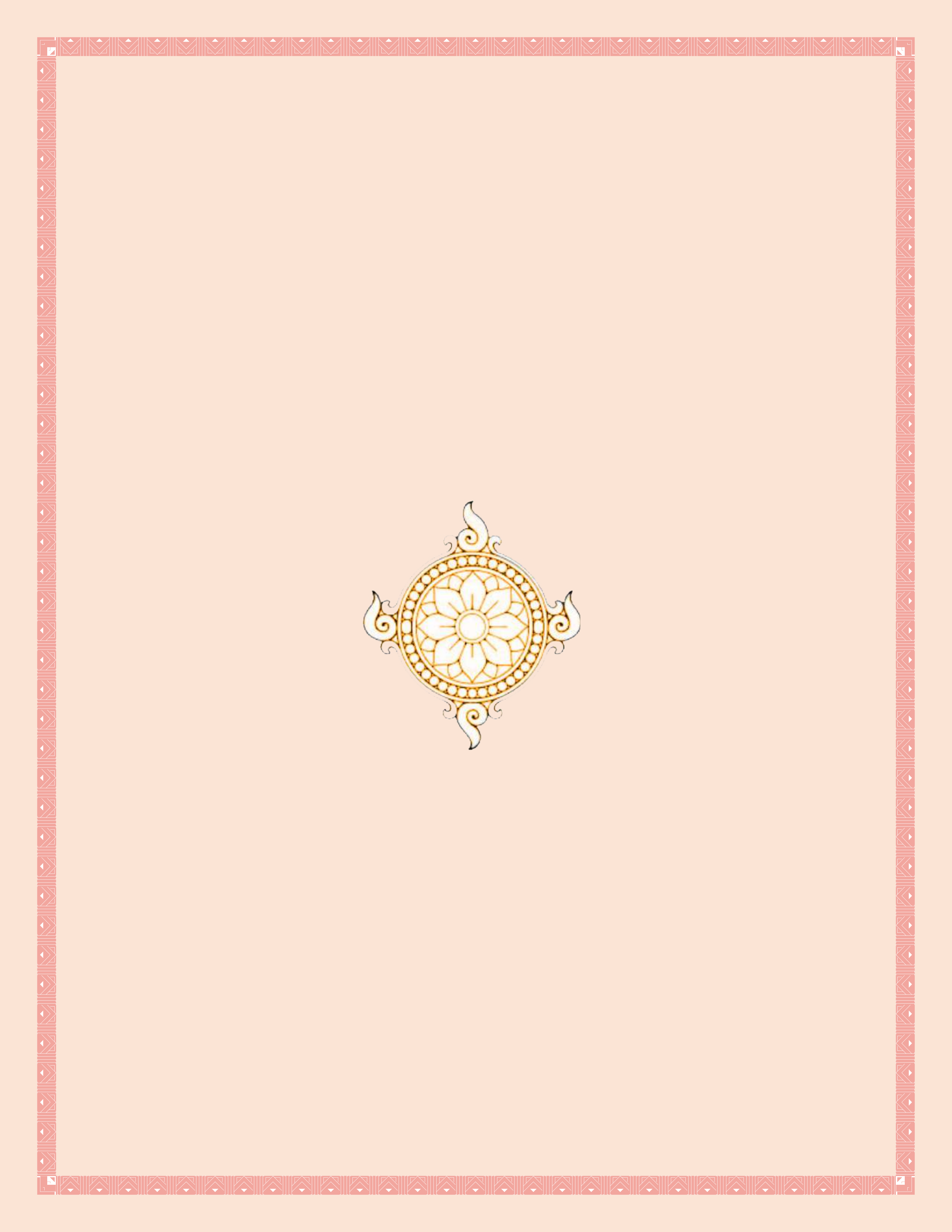
SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 31 – 40)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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SvAmi nigamAnta mahAdeSikan's

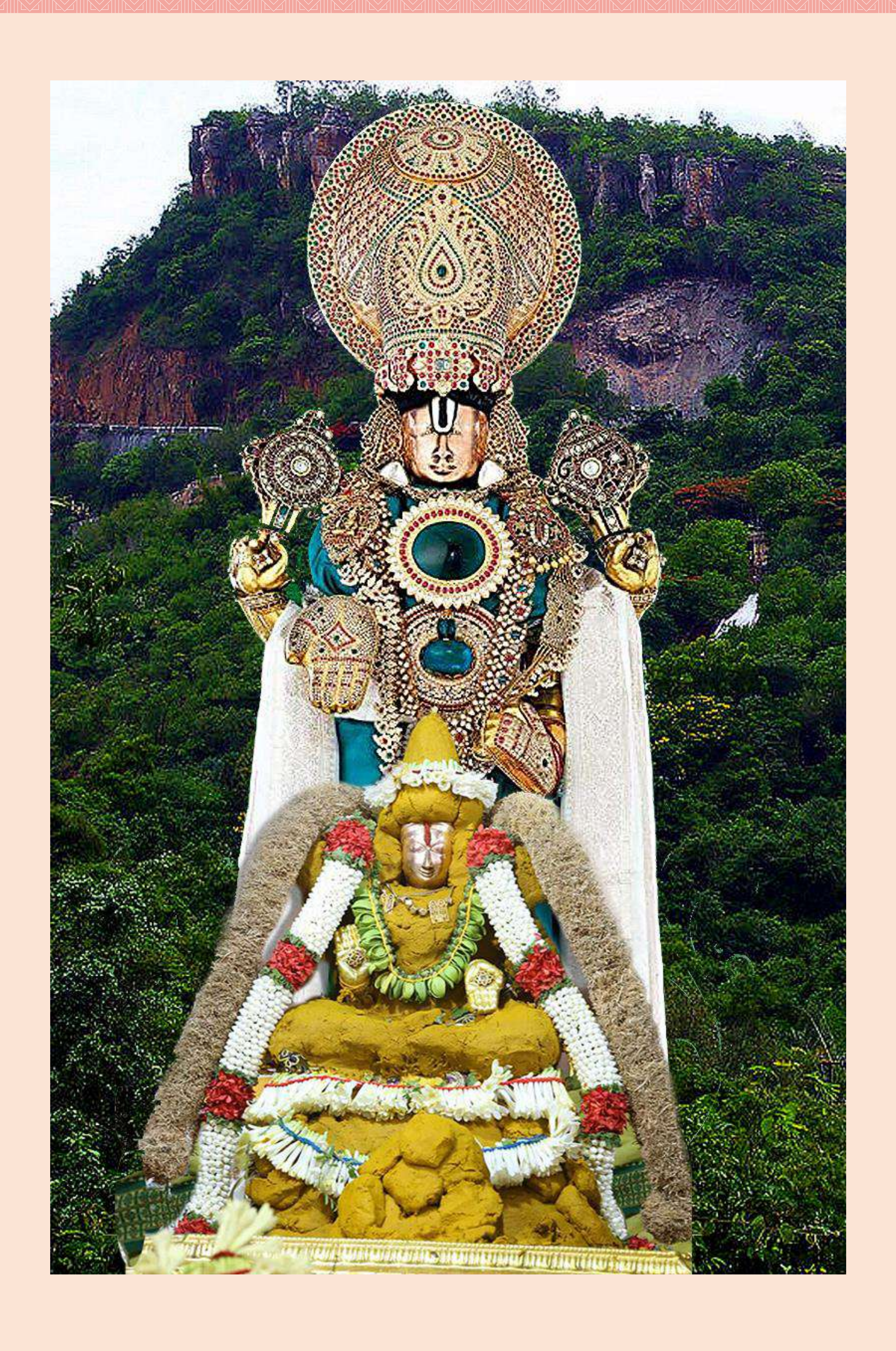


DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



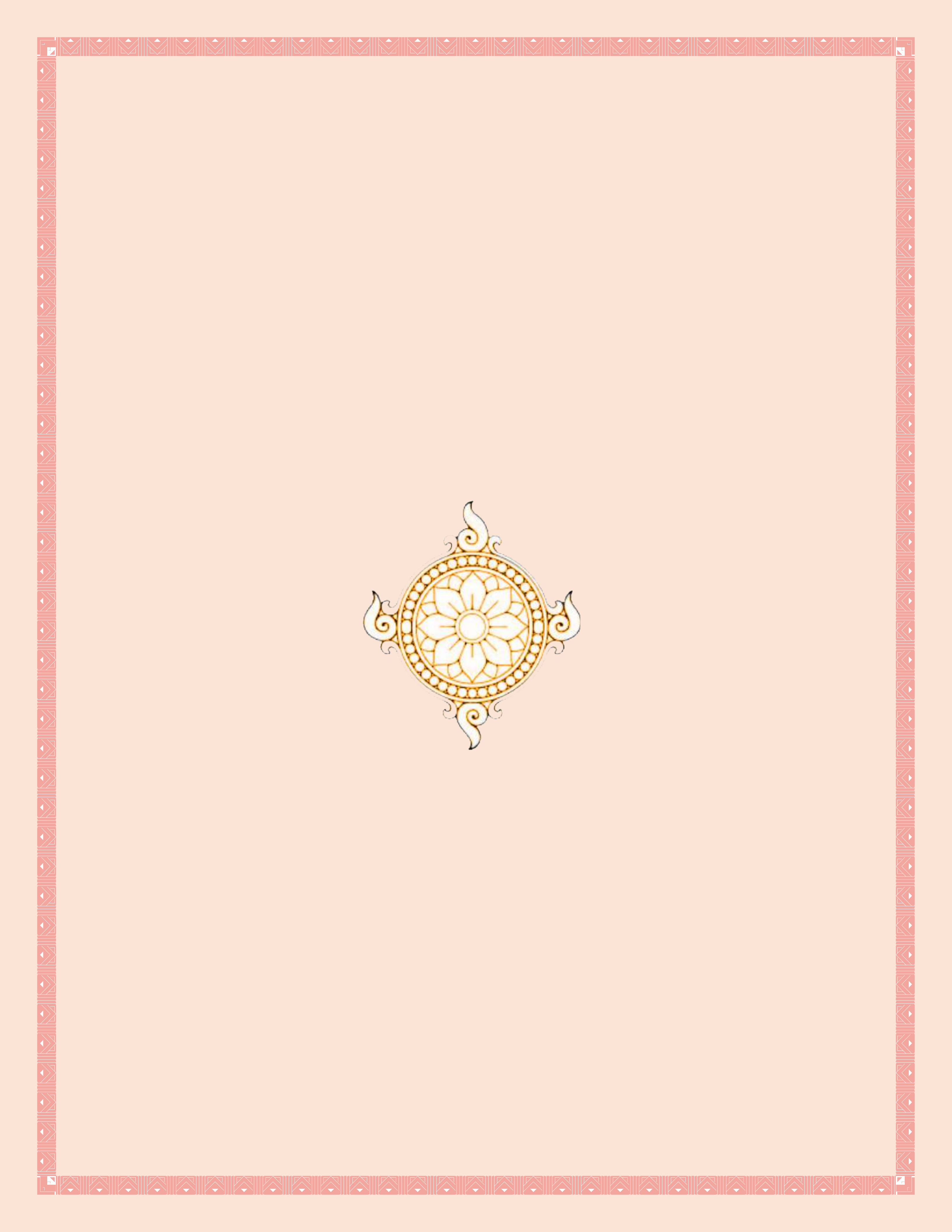


SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadA||

SrImate nigamAnta mahaAdeSikAya namaH||

SrImate gopAladeSika mahAdeSikAya namaH||



Slokam 31

अशिथिल करणेऽस्मिन्नक्षत श्वास वृत्तौ
वपुषि गमन योग्ये वासासादयेयम्।
वृषगिरि कटकेषु व्यञ्जयत्सु प्रतीतैः
मधुमथन दये त्वां वारि धारा विशेषैः॥

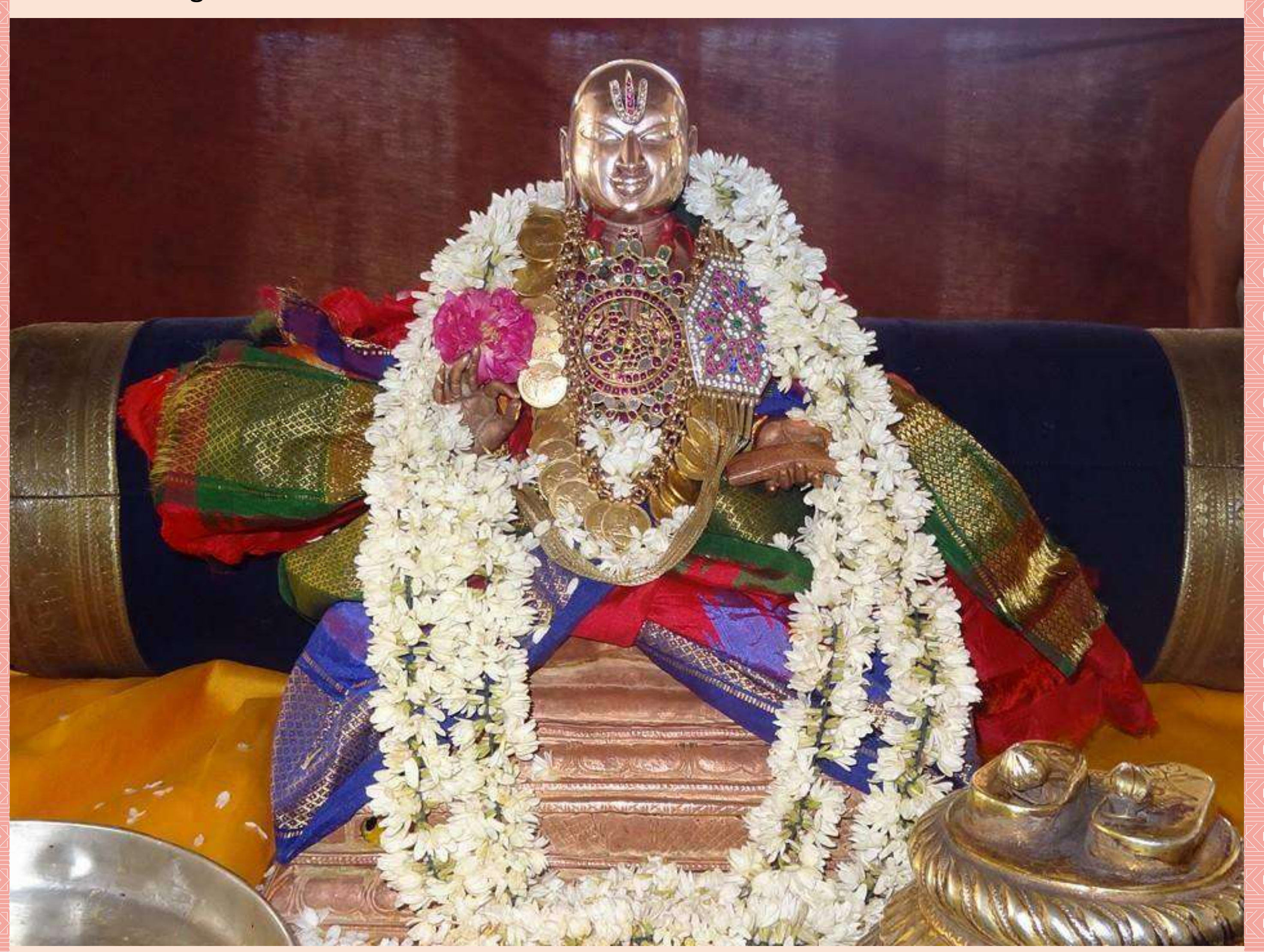
aShithila karaNe asmin akshata SvAsa vrttau
vapushi gamana yogye vAsAm AsAdayeyam |
vrshagiri kaTakeshu vyanjayatsu pratItaiH
madhu mathana daye tvAm vAri dhArA viSeshaiH||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin:

"We commence the fourth set of 10 verses now. The previous verse highlighted SvAmi DeSikan's desire for rendering kaimkaryam to the feet of Lord Srinivasa and implores to DayA Devi to grant him this benefit. SvAmi DeSikan's naichyam in verse 30 is very much in the manner of Andal's declaration of "nAnEtAn AyiDuka" in the elle iLankiLiyE pAsuram. DayA Devi is pleased with the appeal of SvAmi DeSikan and readily consents to granting his request. This verse is fundamental to the 70 verses that follow. DayA Devi then addresses SvAmi DeSikan "Oh SvAmi! You have incarnated on this earth. Why don't you first reflect upon the purpose of your avatAram and then engage in kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa?" The DeSika Mangalam salutation "vede sanjAta khede munijana vacane prApta nityAvamAne sankIrNe sarva varNe sati tadanuguNe nishpramaNe purANe| mAyAvAde samode kalikalusha vaSAt SUnya vAde vivAde dharma trANAya yo'bhUt sa jayati bhagavAn vishNu ghaNTAvatAraH ||" points to the reason for SvAmi DeSikan's incarnation. It is helpful to remember the reason for BhagavAn's avatArams in the manner of partitrANAya sadhUnAm vinASAya ca duskrtAm, namely, to protect the Sadhus and destroy the evil ones. Next, we delve into the reason for SvAmi DeSikan's avatAram. The reasons are several-fold. The Vedam encountered anguish (vede sanjAta khede) due to the fact that it is misinterpreted by people possessing half-baked knowledge. Those who are ignorant stay away from the Vedam, while those who are well-versed exposit on the correct meanings

of the Vedam Rks. However, the half-baked ones are dangerous in that based on an incomplete understanding of the Vedam they make definitive claims, which are contrary to the purport of the Vedas. So much so that the Vedam itself is greatly saddened by this and is in a state of anguish. SvAmi DeSikan's avatAram was intended to dispel this sadness and anguish of the Vedam by revealing the true meanings of the Vedas.



SvAmi DeSikan - TiruvahIndrapuram

Great seers like ParaSara had composed outstanding works to bring out the inner meaning of the Vedam. However, even their words incurred shame (avamAna stithi) due to misinterpretation and wrong interpretation. SvAmi DeSikan incarnated to restore the glory inherent to the words of these great seers.

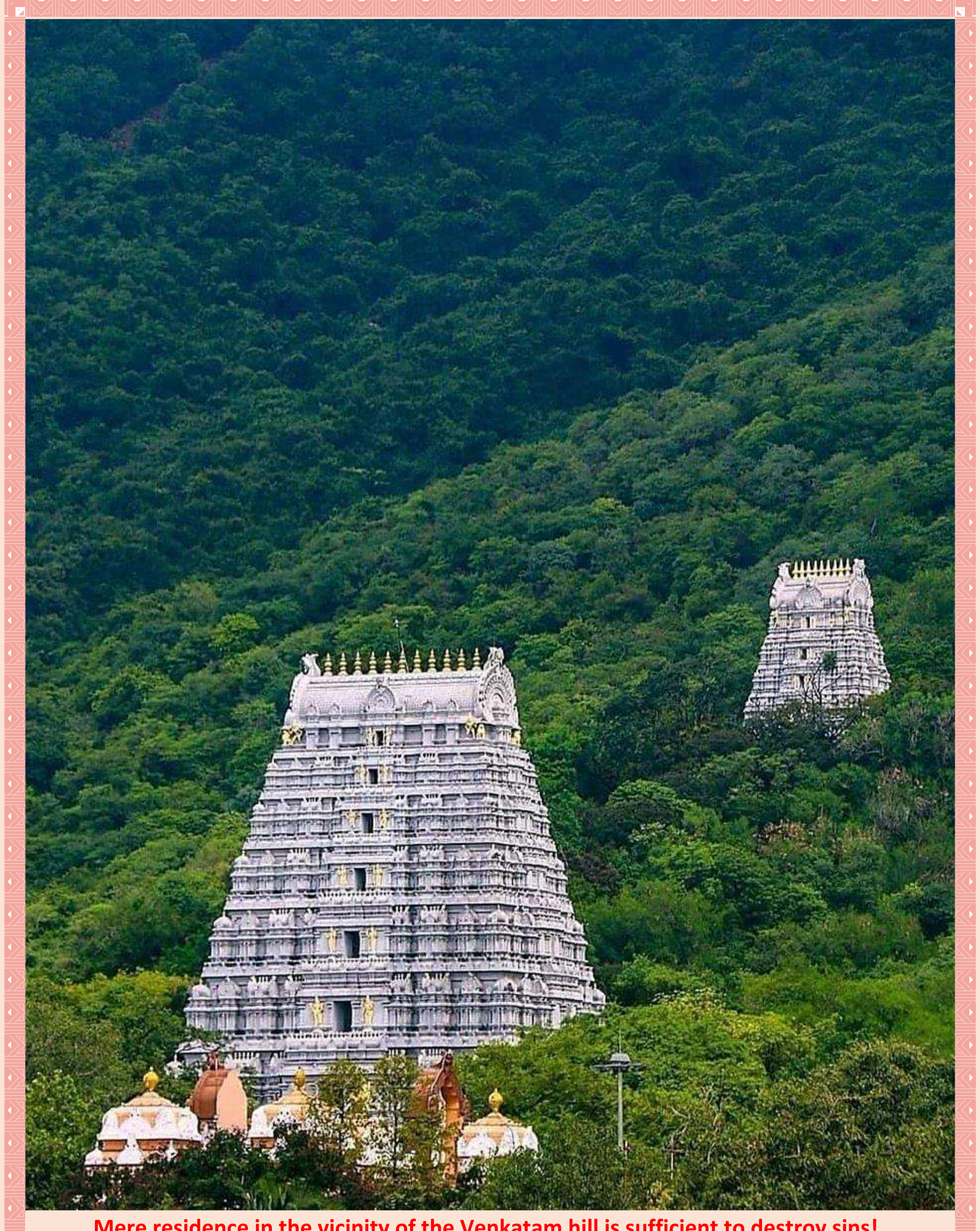
Next varNASrama dharma was greatly compromised at that time. These compromises were justified in the name of "sankIrNe sarva varNe sati tadanuguNe"

namely “such occurrences took place in times of yore. Even great sages engaged in these compromises. Therefore, what is wrong if this is adopted now?” In order to illustrate the proper manner of conforming to varaNaSrama dharma, SvAmi DeSikan incarnated and provided an example.

Next “nishpramANe purANe” and “mayAvAde samode” are touched upon. The PurANAs were not accepted as pramANams. Then, mAyA vAdam put forth arguments that one’s existence and that of the universe are all unreal and everything that one beholds and hears is false. Then what is real becomes a natural question. This line of thought avers that Brahman alone is real. Which means undertaking a study of VedAnta is false, practicing the upAsanAs is false and the like due to mAyA. One needs to be extremely careful when undertaking a study of this system of mAyA vAdam. It could easily lead to the perception that this line of thought is correct and perfectly valid. Worse than this is SUnya vAdam, which exposits that emptiness is all that prevails. At this stage SvAmi DeSikan incarnated to establish the validity of purANAs as pramANams, dispel and root out the flawed arguments and myths propagated by mAyA vAdam and SUnya vAdam thereby protecting dharma.

DayA Devi now states “Oh SvAmi! Look at the enormity of the tasks for which you have incarnated. On the other hand, you have approached Me for rendering kaimkaryam to the feet of Lord Srinivasa. This somehow does not seem appropriate to Me. If you complete the tasks for which you incarnated and then seek Kaimkaryam at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa, it would be most appropriate.” SvAmi DeSikan’s avatAram can be described as one for “traiyanta sthApakoso”. That is to establish the true purport of the Vedas. As a young boy, SvAmi DeSikan was taken by his maternal uncle to the KAlakshepam of Sri NaDAtur AmmAL, who was rendering this at the maNTapam behind the PerumAL sannidhi of Lord VaradarAja. During that time, he was beneficiary of the complete anugraham of SrI AmmAL. Sri AmmAL blessed the child with the words “You will establish the ViSishTAdvaita siddhAntam on a firm pedestal.” Given this background, it is almost as if DayA Devi is reminding SvAmi DeSikan of the numerous tasks that he needs to undertake and therefore instructs him to complete these tasks before seeking Kaimkaryam at the Feet of Srinivasa. SvAmi DeSikan answers this request from DayA Devi through the salutation in this above Slokam 31 – ”aShithila karaNe …. … vAri dhArA viSeshaiH"

This set of ten verses is set to mAlinI meter. Here it must be remembered that if one commits minor sins, the punishment is relatively less stringent. This set of ten verses is set to mAlinI meter.



Mere residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill is sufficient to destroy sins!

This set of ten verses is set to mAlinI meter. Here it must be remembered that if one commits minor sins, the punishment is relatively less stringent. However, just as one is flogged in public for major crimes, the harshest punishment is reserved for those who commit major sins. In this set of ten verses, SvAmi DeSikan affirms that one who has sinned thus need not do anything more than resort to the feet of DayA Devi at whose command is Lord Srinivasa. Let alone this, mere residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill is sufficient to destroy these sins declares SvAmi DeSikan. The sambodhanam in this verse is madhu mathana daye tvAm vAri dhArA viSeshaiH namely Oh DayA Devi of Srinivasa, who destroyed the asuras Madhu and KaiTabha! The reason for this is that Madhu and KaiTabha were opposed to those who follow the Vedam and subscribe to the authority of the Vedam - that is VaidikAs. Madhu-KaiTabha were the ones who stole the Vedam from Brahma. Lord Srinivasa destroyed the asuras and restored the Vedas to Brahma. In a similar manner, we have been instructed by our ancient seers that our inherent nature is to render Kaimkaryam to the feet of Lord Srinivasa. However, due to nescience, ahamkaram, and mamakaram this fact is obscured from us. DayA Devi destroys these and enables us to realize the inherent nature of offering Kaimkaryam to the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Now SvAmi DeSikan addresses DayA Devi "I sought the boon of Kaimkaryam for the feet of Lord Srinivasa. However, you expressed reservations about this on the grounds that I have numerous tasks to perform. Therefore, I now submit only one request. Please grant me the benefit of residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill." DayA Devi seems to suggest that why not make the residence the goal towards the end of your avatAram, SvAmi? To this SvAmi DeSikan answers how could I possibly know when this time will arrive. For example, when one enters service be it at age 18 or 21, it is a given that retirement age is 60 or 65 as the case may be. Thus, one has certainty in that the retirement time is fixed. However, at birth nobody knows how long they will live. Also, no doctor can offer any guarantees about how long one lives. This being the case how is it possible to know when the time of avataram ending arrives is SvAmi DeSikan's question to DayA Devi. When is the appropriate time therefore to engage in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa? In this body when the 10 karmendriyAs and j~nAnendriyAs and manas are intact, I would like to request residence at the Venkatam hill declares SvAmi DeSikan. It is great to have the desire for Bhagavat Kaimkaryam. However, to enable this the body needs to co-operate. If this does not happen, it becomes impossible to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. In the TiruppAvai pAsuram pOvAn pOkinrArai pOkAmal kAttu, joining a group of SriVaishNavAs to engage in vratham is a great boon. The very act of going along is

glorified. The commentary of Sri PeriyavacchAn Pillai outlines this act of going as proceeding towards the Venkatam hill for Kaimkaryam or proceeding on the arcirAdi mArgam. Going to the Venkatam hill and rendering Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa is no doubt the ultimate goal. The very act of proceeding towards the Venkatam hill is noble - the planning for this yatrA several months/years in advance, the acceptance of huNDi offerings from other BhaktAs who are unable to make the yatrA, the recitation of Govinda nAmam while ascending the hill, any amount of travails encountered in the process being disregarded for the ultimate benefit of darSanam of Lord Srinivasa are great things in their own right. When can one proceed thus? For this, Sri PeriyavacchAn Pillai states - "It is in the manner of Akrura undertaking the yAtrA to bring Lord Krishna to Mathura. Alternatively, it could denote the sojourn through arcirAdi mArgam." It must be remembered here that Akrura was dispatched on a mission by KamSa to bring Krishna to Mathura with the intention of doing harm to Lord Krishna. However, none of this bothered Akrura. Instead, his mind was filled with noble thoughts. "I shall seek out Krishna, who is probably grazing the cows. Upon beholding Him I shall fall at His feet. He will invariably raise me uttering the words that you are older than me and therefore, it is inappropriate for you to fall at My feet. Saying this He will raise me and embrace me." Such a yAtrA is therefore great. For such a yAtrA, the body comprising the 10 indriyAs and mind needs to co-operate. Only then does the yAtrA to the Venkatam Hill becomes possible. When will the body co-operate? Only when one is strong rather than when one is old and infirm. Therefore, SvAmi DeSikan requests DayA Devi for the boon of residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam Hill right away.

During the PuraTTAsi mAsam, there is a great utsavam for SvAmi DeSikan in many places with Kanchipuram and TiruvahIndrapuram being salient among them. One can imagine the various activities for this utsavam in a manner similar to the Akrura yatrA or pilgrimage to the Venkatam Hill. Starting from the morning, SvAmi DeSikan from his avatAra sthalam of SrI TUppul proceeds to perform mangalAshAsanam for Lord VaradarAja in a golden palanquin, beautifully decorated and accompanied by BhAgavatas singing his glory. The festivities would be quite similar to that of a wedding. By the time SvAmi DeSikan completes the mangalAshAsanam of all the Sannidhis, it would be well into the night. This usually coincides with EkAdashi, which is the prescribed day of fast. When one undertakes the strenuous activities associated with the utsavam during the time of fast, the body being weak would not cooperate many times. Instead of such times, SvAmi DeSikan declares the correct time for engaging in the yAtra for Venkatam Hills is "ashithila karaNe asmin".


vaLar oLi mAyOn

SvAmi DeSikan follows the lead of SvAmi NammAzhvAr in pursuing kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa where in the AzhvAr declares "ozhivil kalAmellAm uDanAi manni vazhuvilA aDimai ceiya vENDum". In a like manner SvAmi DeSikan desires kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa when he is healthy and the indriyas and mind are willing. Here it may be asked, on the one hand SvAmi DeSikan desires to undertake Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa, on the other hand he is seeking residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam Hill. Is there not a difference between these things? vastvAdhikam is the statement from SrImad RahasyatrayasAram which becomes relevant in this context. SvAmi DeSikan instructs us through this statement that mere bhakti towards one's AcAryan is insufficient. One must exude the same bhakti towards the AcAryA's Devikal, children, place of residence, his garden, his place of anuShTanam. In a like manner if we regard the feet of Lord Srinivasa as upAdeyam (means of upliftment), His place of residence too becomes similarly upAdeyam for us. SvAmi NammAzhvAr highlights this message again in the Tiruvaimozhi pAsuram

"kiLar oLi iLamai keDuvatan munnam

vaLar oLi mAyOn maruviya kOyil

vaLar iLam pozhil cUzh mAliruncOlai

taLar vilarAkil cArvatu catirE"

It is helpful to note that that both mAliruncOlai and Tiruvenkatam bear the name Tirumalai. Hence the Azhvar's statement for mAliruncOlai is also applicable to Tiruvenkatam. Many scholars aver that MaliruncOlai is only a vyAjam (excuse). The tribute is in fact intended for Tiruvenkatam. iLamai keDuvatan denotes the state where the indriyas do not function properly and energy declines. On the other hand, the radiance of vaLar oLi mAyOn is only increasing. Here it is important to note the difference between sharIram and deham. Both denote the body. deham denotes growth. This is best illustrated in the case of a growing child as it advances from birth through the stages of 3, 6, 9 months, one year, three years, five years, ten years, and the like. Once the growth reaches its peak, there begins a gradual decline. This decline is denoted by sharIram. shIryate iti sharIram denotes this fact. Therefore, until the youth stage the body is deham. However, when old age sets in it becomes sharIram. In the context of the AzhvAr's outpouring, he declares that before the transformation from deham to SarIram takes place one must undertake Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa in Tirumalai. When Lord Srinivasa beholds the arrival of able-bodied seekers thirsting for Kaimkaryam, His joy grows without bound, resulting in an increase in His tejas. This is also the result of mangaLASAsanam by

mahAns. For example, we celebrate divya deSams as those places where the great AzhvArs have rendered mangaLASAsanam. In a like manner, the sAnnidhyam of the Lord increases, when mangaLASAsanam is performed by mahAns who have mastered the Vedas. As a result, sakti too increases for the Lord as evidenced by the tribute "vaLar iLam pozhil cUzh mAliruncOlai" SvAmi DeSikan follows the lead of SvAmi NammazhvAr in seeking the benefit of Kaimkaryam at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa, while he is in deham form through the salutation "aSithila karaNe asmin". When the maha j~nAni, PrahlAdA was in gurukula vAsam, he was instructed by his Gurus in the supremacy of HiraNyakaSipu. However, his steadfast belief resulting from instruction from Sage NArada even while he was in his mother's womb gave him the correct knowledge and perspective that Lord Hari was the supreme being. Therefore, he was at odds with these teachers. While this happened, other students in the Gurukulam advised him "Why don't you accept the Guru's words and glorify HiranyakaSipu for now? When one advances in age one can adopt the means of haraye namaH" To this PrahlAdA responded "We do not know what the stage of advanced age holds for us. Therefore, while we are endowed with strong limbs and body, we need to cultivate the habit of uttering BhagavannAma (names of the Lord)". The declaration "bAlye krDanakAsaktA yauvane vishayonmukhAH aj~nA nayantyaSaktyA ca vArddhakam samupasthitam| tasmAt bAlye vivekAtmA yatet Sreyase sadA" becomes important here. (One's childhood and even the stage where one is able to identify right from wrong is lost in playful pursuits. Youth is lost in enjoyment of pleasures afforded by life. aj~nAnam (ignorance) and weakness accompany the onset of old age." One may desire to engage in Bhagavat Kaimkaryam at Tirumalai in old age. However, the body is not strong enough to enable this. At this point one regrets not having undertaken this Kaimkaryam in the younger days. For example, one may think that upon retirement, he will engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. However, upon retirement he finds himself busier than while working, due to family demands, to take care of grandchildren and the like leaving no time for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Therefore, during the bAlyam years itself it is advisable to develop bhakti for BhagavAn and engage in Kaimkaryam. Tirumangai Azhvar documents his anubhavam in the pAsuram

"muRRa mUttu kOl tuNaiyA mun aDi nOkki vaLaintu

iRRa kAl pOl taLLi meLLa iruntu anku iLaiyA mun

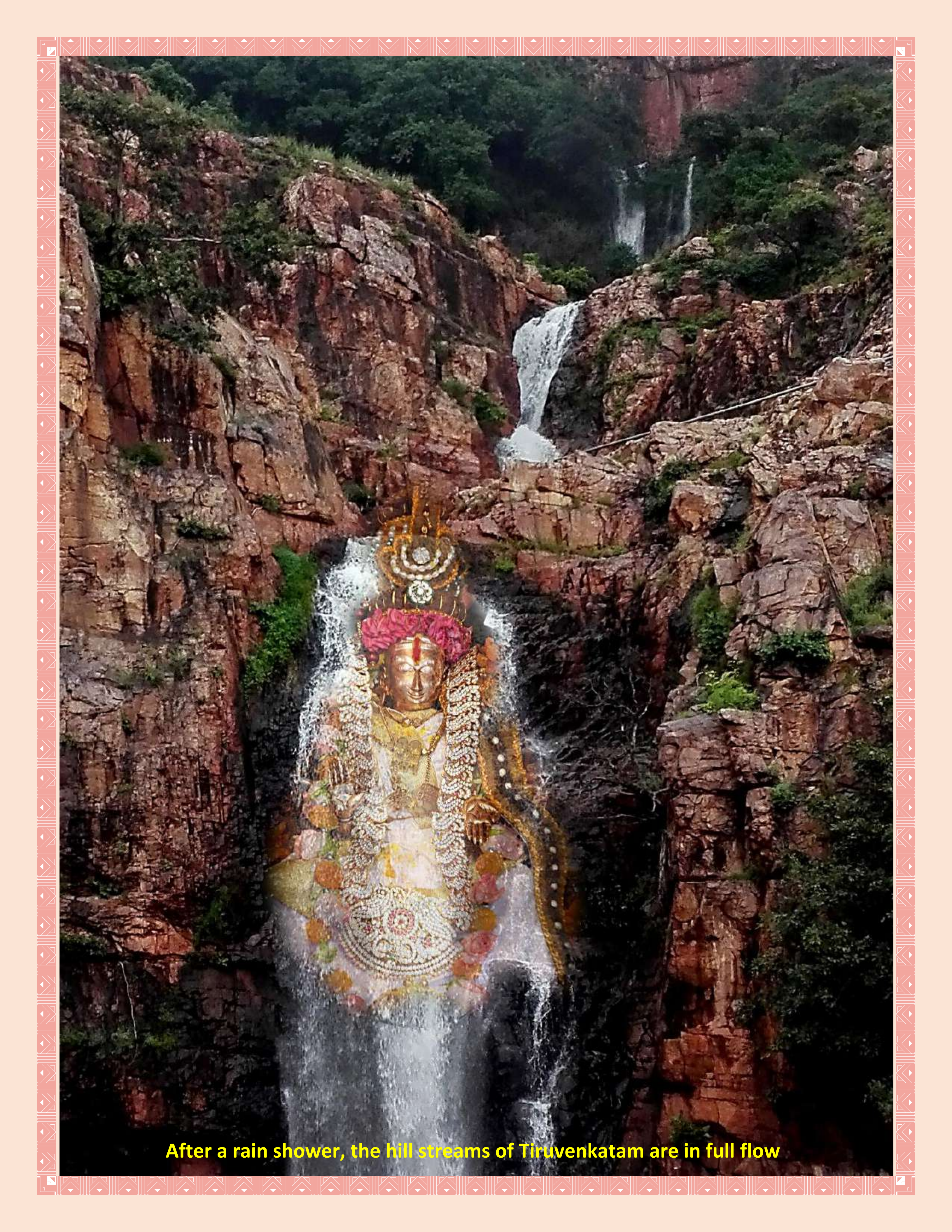
peRRa tAi pOl vanta peyicci perumulai uNDu, uyirai

vaRRa vAnki unDa vAyAn vatari vaNankutumE"



"We are unable to walk. Therefore, we use a walking stick (muRRamUttu kOl tuNaiyA). The body is bent. By the time I take one step forward I go back four steps. Before begetting this state, one needs to undertake pilgrimage to Badrinath and receive the grace of BadrinArAyaNan." SvAmi DeSikan in a like manner desires Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa when he is fit and able through the salutation "aSithila karaNe asmin." SvAsa vrittau is the next salutation in this verse that documents the fact that one must be able to breathe well in order to climb the lofty peaks leading to the Venkatam Hill. "vapushi gamana yogye" is the next salutation which attests to the fact that one may think that one may be hale and hearty until the age of eighty (say). However, it is entirely likely that the individual may become

old and infirm by age sixty-five or so. Therefore, before this state is attained SvAmi DeSikan requests DayA Devi to bestow upon him the boon of residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam Hill. “adya vAbda SatAnte vA mrtyurvai praNinAm dhruvaH” was the statement used by Vasudeva to address KamSa when he was ready to kill Devaki. The import of this statement is that, “Do not worry about death. All beings born in this world must encounter death one day or another. Either today or a hundred years later.” The import of this statement is that this body is not permanent. One day or another it perishes. This is not only an upadesam for Kamsa but also for all of us. If one intends to undertake a noble task this should be done immediately without delay. Postponing this incurs the risk of never being able to carry out the task. Therefore, SvAmi DeSikan declares in the next salutation “vapushi gamana yogye” “In this state I need the benefit of Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa.” The next salutation pratItaiH vAri dhArA viSeshaiH vrshagiri kaTakeshu vya~njayatsu further elucidates SvAmi DeSikan’s desire. DayA Devi enquires of SvAmi DeSikan “Do you wish to have residence at the top of the Venkatam Hill or in the vicinity of the foothills?” SvAmi DeSikan answers this in the manner of pUrvAcAryas who declare the 7 hills to be sacred. In fact, due to the sacredness of the seven hills, SvAmi BhAshyakArar refused to ascend the hill. Upon insistence of his disciple SrI AnantAzhvAn, SvAmi BhAshyakArar used his knees for support with feet raised to climb the seven hills. No act to defile the hills must be undertaken. In keeping with these facts, SvAmi DeSikan answers DayA Devi “It is sufficient for me to gain residence in the vicinity of the foothills of Venkatam.” SrI u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin then narrated a personal instance where his great grandfather, SrI u.vE. Valayapettai SvAmi undertook pilgrimage to Tiruvenkatam and performed mangaLASAsanam. Unlike the present time, in those days one had to undertake travel by foot. Until he ascended the hill performed mangaLASAsanam for Lord Srinivasa and returned to the foothills, he never even attended to nature’s calls due to the fact that this act would defile the hills. The intent needs to be observed carefully. This sacred hill should not be rendered impure on account of any act. Therefore, extraordinary restraint and discipline was exhibited by Sri. Valayapettai SvAmi to maintain the sanctity of the hill. There is another reason for SvAmi DeSikan’s request for residence at the foothills of Tiruvenkatam. After a rain shower, the hill streams of Tiruvenkatam are in full flow. There is a stream known as AzhvAr tIrtham. Mere beholding of the flow of this hill stream from a distance is a blessing in its own right! SvAmi DeSikan resolved that this can be easily obtained by seeking residence at the foothills of Tiruvenkatam. For commoners this may be a sight to behold for a while like a show. However,


After a rain shower, the hill streams of Tiruvenkatam are in full flow

SvAmi DeSikan views this flow as vAri dhArA viSeshaiH vya~njayatsu, namely this is the torrential flow of DayA Devi. The coolness and purity of the water are noteworthy. This removes the tApams (samsAric afflictions) affecting us. This DayA flow destroys our sins. The hill streams at Tiruvenkatam having this viSesham is a manifestation of the Lord's DayA. Therefore, a sight of these streams from the foothills is sufficient. Hence SvAmi DeSikan seeks residence in the vicinity of the foothills of Tiruvenkatam. SvAmi NammAzhvAr renders his mangaLASAsanam for the hill streams at Tiruvenkatam in the pAsuram "teNNal aruvi maNi pon muttalaikkum tiruvEnkaDattAnE" SvAmi DeSikan follows in the AzhvAr's footsteps, views the hill streams of Tiruvenkatam as the torrential flow of DayA Devi and thus seeks residence near the foothills of Tiruvenkatam, while he is healthy and able bodied. Upon hearing this appeal, DayA Devi is delighted and assures SvAmi DeSikan "Give up your worry. I shall advise you on what to do". This anubhavam will be captured in the next verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmin:

"Oh DayA Devi! May you generously grant me the privilege of staying and moving about in the hills and meadows around, watered by cool waterfalls, streams, and ponds, so that I can enjoy the sweetness of the hills of the Lord. Even while my health is fit, my limbs are strong and vigorous, before I become old and disabled from frequenting the holy areas anywhere.

1. The stay required for one's edification is near and around the actual temple.

2. The casual reader may imagine, wrongly so, that SvAmi DeSikan longs to stay in nearby areas of scenic beauty and not specifically, the temple precincts. However, it should not be lost on them that SvAmi's subtle reference to the cool waterfalls is reminiscent of DayA Devi. The holy shrine is meant for visiting exclusively for worship. In a practical sense, none ought to stay in and around the Lord, for a moment, uselessly."



Slokam 32

अविदित निज योग क्षेममात्मानभिज्ञं

गुण लव रहितं मां गोप्तुकामा दये त्वम् ।

परवति चतुरैस्ते विभ्रमैः श्रीनिवासे

बहुमतिमनपायां विन्दसि श्रीधरण्योः ॥

avidita nija yogakshemam Atma anabhij~nam

guNa lava rahitam mAm goptukAmA daye tvam|

paravati caturaiste vibhramaiH SrInivAse

bahumatim anapAyAm vindasi SrIdharaNyoH||

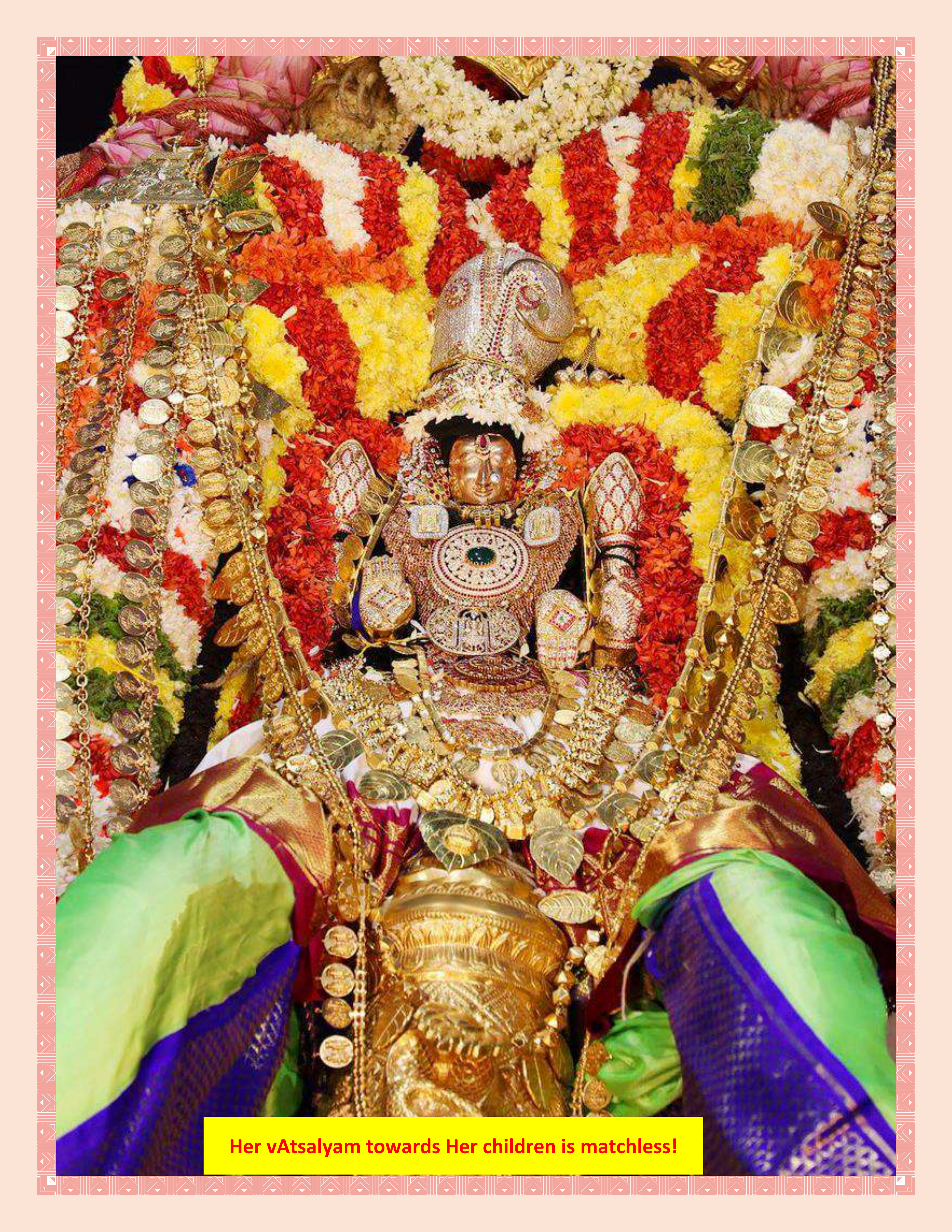


We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin:

"DayA Devi declared in the previous verse - Oh SvAmi! The purpose of your incarnation is to establish ViSishTAdvaIta siddhantam on a firm pedestal. For this you need to travel to places like Srirangam, TiruvahIndrapuram, Kanchipuram and the like. Instead, you are seeking residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. Fear not. For people like you who abide by the Saastras, it follows that nigrahet indriyArtha kAmaH yatra yatra vase naraH tatra tatra kurukshetram naImiSam pushkaram tatha." The import of this declaration is that for one who has subdued his senses and is engaged in constant Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, his place of residence itself becomes transformed into Kurukshetram, NaImiSAraNyam, and Pushkaram (puNya kshetrams).

Therefore, people like SvAmi DeSikan need not make any special efforts to seek residence in a puNya kshetram. Hence, DayA Devi assures SvAmi DeSikan that his place of residence itself will be transformed into Tiruvenkatam and that She Herself accompanied by Lord Srinivasa will be present at his place of residence. Consequently, She instructs him not to worry and proceed with the tasks for which he incarnated.

SvAmi DeSikan is greatly moved by the vAtsalyam of DayA Devi and this anubhavam naturally falls into place in this verse, avidita nija yoga …. ….. vindasi SrIdharaNyoH. tvam|paravati chaturaiste vibhramaiH shrInivAse bahumatiM anapAyAM vindasi shrIdharaNyoH is the exact verse.



Her vAtsalyam towards Her children is matchless!

SvAmi DeSikan focuses on the vAtsalyam of DayA Devi and Her assurance to protect him. It is instructive to observe the use of the word "mAm" which is replete with meaning. This denotes the utter humility of SvAmi DeSikan wherein he reflects upon the fact, “what is it that I have done to deserve the grace of DayA Devi? I have not been born in a great kulam. Nor do I have the requisite knowledge to deserve Her grace. I have engaged in numerous violations of SaastrAic injunctions. I am the lowest of the low. Oh DayA Devi! You promise to take residence wherever I live. Your vAtsalyam is matchless. Contemplating on this anugraham of DayA Devi makes my body tremble.” This is also a reflection of our state of not knowing what is good and what is bad for us as expounded upon in the salutation avidita nija yogakshemam Atma anabhij~nam. The term yogakshemam deserves further examination. It is made up of two terms yogam and kshemam. yogam means begetting something that one has never had - apUrvArtha lAbham. For example, if one gets a large sum of money through a lottery, it is considered yogam. kshemam denotes the preservation of that state -labdhasya paripAlanam. Now it becomes important to dwell upon what SvAmi DeSikan means by yogakshemam in this context. SvAmi DeSikan refers to the fact that we have had numerous janma-s in keeping with the BhagavadgIta declaration “bahUnime vyatitAni”. Only in this birth were we fortunate to be born as a SrIvaishNavan. Furthermore, it is only in this birth that we acquired sadAcArya sambandham. The AcArya kaTAksham has paved the way for our redemption. This is the apUrvArtha lAbham denoted as yogam. Not only did we beget AcArya sambandham but also were the beneficiaries of rahasya mantra upadeSams along with their esoteric meanings. This anugraham coming about after innumerable births is yogam. kshemam in this context denotes the preservation of the yogam namely the AcArya anugraham. This calls for anusShThAnam (constant practice) on our part. Specifically, it requires mastering the esoteric meanings underlying the mantrams received as through AcArya upadeSam, reflecting on the deep meanings, and instructing deserving sat-SishyAs, who have bhakti toward BhagavAn, in these rahasyams. This is denoted by labdhasya paripAlanam. When this is what is called for, SvAmi DeSikan in a mood of intense self-deprecation declares “avidita nija yogakshemam” (I am completely ignorant of what yogakshemam stands for not knowing what is good and bad). Never mind this ignorance, is he possessed of Atmaj~nAnam (knowledge of the Atma)? SvAmi DeSikan answers this in the next tribute as “Atma anbhij~nam” (bereft of Atma j~nAnam namely that the AtmA is exclusively the property of the Supreme Lord Narayana, who is its owner and controller. Its existence, and activities are solely at the discretion of Lord Narayana for His pleasure.).


Submit your AtmA to Him - its' rightful owner!

We on the other hand think that we are totally independent and not subservient to anyone. In fact, being subservient is viewed as demeaning and derogatory. This AtmA is in fact subservient to Lord Narayana and His BhAgavatAs. This is known as Atma j~nAnam. SvAmi DeSikan declares that he is bereft of this j~nAnam. SvAmi DeSikan instructs us in an important truth here. Regarding the AtmA, which is the property of Lord Narayana, as one's own is a great sin. This is equivalent to possession of stolen property. Here it becomes important to note the anubhavam of SvAmi BhAshyakArar in terms of what constitutes theft - the use of other's property without their permission for one's own benefit is defined to be the act of theft. In this context, without realizing that the AtmA belongs to Lord Narayana, one engages in its use for one's own comforts and purposes. This definitely constitutes an act of theft. SvAmi DeSikan eloquently describes this act in the DevanAyaka PancASat salutation "AtmApahAra rasikena mayaiva dattam anyairadhArya madhunA vibhudhaikanAtha| svIkrtya dhArayitumarhasi mAm tvadIyam coropanIta nijanUpuravat svapAde||"

While some thefts are committed, there is a sense of guilt and shame accompanying the act. However, the theft of the AtmA takes place quite shamelessly, in fact, with vicarious delight. Having engaged in this act, SvAmi DeSikan notes here that now he realizes that the AtmA is stolen property and therefore, he submits the AtmA to the rightful owner, Lord DevanAyaka. What is his manner of submission? It is like the stolen anklet of the Lord, which the thief mistakenly believed fit his wife or daughter but was dismayed to find that it did not and therefore, he thinks it is better to restore the stolen anklet to its rightful owner. What a poetic genius! Even though this is the manner of submission, the Lord accepts this submission and does not turn away the supplicant. SvAmi DeSikan's works are replete with examples of this nature to convey important philosophical truths and doctrinal principles. These are worthy of appreciation in the same manner that one appreciates a darsanam of the Lord. One pays close attention to the vastrams, AbharaNams, pushpam, koNDai and other alankArams of the Lord. In a like manner, one needs to appreciate in detail the gems embedded in the works of SvAmi DeSikan.

Returning to the DayA Satakam verse, next it may be asked are we in possession of any good qualities? SvAmi DeSikan answers this in the negative through the salutation "guNa lava rahitam mAm" (not even an iota). SvAmi DeSikan submits the appeal that even though he is in a pitiable state, DayA Devi needs to protect him. PeriyAzhvAr declares in his outpouring "nanmai tImaikaL onRum aRiyEn nAraNA! ennum ittanai allAl punmaiyAl unnaip puLLuvam pEci pukazhvAn

anRu kaNDAi tirumAlE" and again in the pAsuram "vAkkut tUimai ilAmayinAlE mAdavA unnai vAikoLLa mATTEn nAkku ninnai allAl ariyAtu nAn adanjuvan en vacam anRu." SvAmi DeSikan follows the lead of the AzhvAr in his declaration "guNa lava rahitam mAm goptukAmA daye tvam" (Given all my limitations documented herein You resolve to protect me! aho bhAgyam! What matchless grace indeed!).

Sri KUrattAzhvAn in his VaradarAjastavam tribute "akrita sukrtaH sudushkrttaraH Subha guNa lavaleSa deSAtigaH| aSubha guNa parassahasrAvrto varadamuruDayAm gatim tvAm vrNe" (Is there an iota of good deed in some nook and corner? No matter how hard one tries to look one is unable to find this in me.) Let this be, is he without sins, is the next question? The sins are numerous due to engaging in forbidden acts. Alright, is he endowed with any good qualities? Even if there are good qualities in a place of residence, I shun them and take residence in a place that is far away and replete with the exact opposite qualities. Let this be so. Is he bereft of kAma krodha etc? Not one or two but endowed with these inauspicious traits numbering in the thousands. "Oh Lord Varadaraja! it is not easy to protect me who is thus endowed. You are indeed the ocean of DayA and You alone can protect me"

In a like manner SvAmi DeSikan submits his appeal to DayA Devi "goptukAmA daye tvam" (Oh DayA Devi! By protecting me You gain immense credit). The manner of protection afforded by DayA Devi is documented in the tribute "paravati caturaiste vibhramaiH SrInivAse." The implication here is that Lord Srinivasa is an impartial judge who is guided in His actions solely by the prescriptions of the SaastrAs. Since He is under the sway of DayA Devi, She by Her various leelAs and persuasive speech causes the Lord to change His position. AzhvAr declares "alli malar makaL boga mayakkukaL" in his mangaLASAsanam. Due to Her various leelAs DayA Devi renders the Lord captive. Beholding this, SrI Devi and BhUdevi, who are along with the Lord laud this act of DayA Devi with respect. It may be remembered that DayA Devi is a co-consort of Lord Srinivasa along with Sri Devi, BhU Devi and NeelA Devi. Getting approbation from other consorts of the Lord is no mean feat. How does this approbation come about? Only on account of DayA Devi did the Lord give up residence in SrI VaikuNTham and take up residence in the Venkatam Hill "mayAvi paramAnandam tyaktvA vaikuNTam uttamam SvAmi pushkaraNI tIrE ramayA saha modate" solely for the purpose of protecting those who have surrendered to Him. He is accompanied by His consorts Sri Devi and BhU Devi at the Venkatam hill. They are wondering how to protect the supplicant, who has greatly sinned and is bound to incur the wrath of Lord Srinivasa. However, while

These consorts are engaged in contemplation, DayA Devi has executed Their task for Them by destroying the supplicant's sins! Therefore, SrI Devi and BhU Devi pay their tribute to DayA Devi. This is reflected in the tribute "vindasi SrIdharaNyoH"



"vindasi SrIdharaNyoH"

Lord Srinivasa is the Father of all sentient and insentient beings in the universe. However, like any father He is greatly angered when His children disobey His commands and act in a manner opposed to the Sastras. SrI Devi and BhU Devi being the consorts of the Lord are engaged in contemplation of how to mitigate the anger of Lord Srinivasa and ensure that He protects His children. At this juncture, DayA Devi renders the Lord's anger a non-issue by wiping out without a trace the sins of the supplicants, thereby rendering them fitting receptacles for Lord Srinivasa's grace. When SrI Devi and BhU Devi behold this astonishing act of DayA

Devi, they offer their tribute to Her. The Lord and His consorts, who are the Parents for the entire universe, confer Their grace on Their children entirely on account of the enormous act of DayA Devi. These children may be entirely undeserving of Their grace but yet due to the act of DayA Devi They overlook the sins of the supplicant and bestow Their blessings. This is revealed to us by SvAmi DeSikan in this verse. In conclusion, it is important to develop bhakti for SvAmi DeSikan's feet since he has revealed to us the mechanism of DayA Devi's grace for seeking the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa and His consorts. We need to engage in contemplation of the mahopakAram of SvAmi DeSikan and DayA Devi."

Next we quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmin:

"What is self? What is its nature? What are its duties? Animals, even humans are being born, live in some manner, and pass away. A sentient being ought to know how he has to live. He has SaastrAs to guide him. He has to follow his day-to-day life accordingly, seeking his real good. I am not competent in all these efforts. I possess no worthwhile good qualities. Nevertheless, Oh DayA Devi! You have taken an interest in saving me; in redeeming my soul! You would keep the para-tattva, the Supreme power, Lord Srinivasa at your command. You have a hold - a commanding sway over Him. Thereby You move Him to act in my favor, notwithstanding my failings. This is indeed a heartening duty that the Lord's consorts, MahAlakshmiI and BhUmi Devi undertake. As women, as my mothers, They are tender, fond, kindly disposed, and generous towards me - even more so than the Lord. They come forward to congratulate You on Your phenomenal accomplishment. Some poetic imagination is called for here:

1. SrI Devi, BhU Devi and Neela Devi (to appear in verse 36) stand nearby. However, it is DayA Devi - a guNam, which has been given live form by SvAmi DeSikan that persuades the Lord to sympathize with my state.

2. A correct perspective needs to be developed by all readers. Forgetting rationalistic prejudices, DayA Devi is portrayed as a consort of the Lord - as a force in physical form to move the Lord in our favor. However, this does not in any way diminish the role of MahAlakshmI, BhUmi Devi or Neela Devi, the three consorts of the Lord mentioned in the hoary Vedas.

3. Interpreters of mysticism do sometimes equate the consorts and DayA to hypothesize a jealousy between them. However, I dare not indulge in such a venture"

Slokam 33

फल वितरण दक्षं पक्षपातानभिज्ञं

प्रगुण मनुविधेयं प्राप्य पद्मा सहायम्।

महति गुण समाजे मानपूर्वं दये त्वं

प्रतिवदसि यथार्हं पाप्मनां मामकानाम्॥

phala vitaraNa daksham pakshapAtAnabhij~nam

praguNam anuvidheyam prApya padmA sahAyam|

mahati guNa samAje mAnapUrvam daye tvam

prativadasi yathArham pApmanAm mAmakAnAm||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar Swamin:

"In the 30th verse, SvAmi DeSikan described himself as aparAdha cakravarti and requests DayA Devi for the benefit of Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa's feet. In the next verse through the salutation aSithila karaNe asmin, SvAmi DeSikan requests DayA Devi for the benefit of residence at the foothills of Tiruvenkatam. To this DayA Devi responded with the anugraham that "For someone like you who has total vairAgyam, and is interested only in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa, while maintaining exemplary adherence to Saastram, your place of residence itself becomes NaimiSaranyam, Tiruvenkatam and the like. Lord Srinivasa and His consorts will be present at your place of residence itself. Therefore, you need not make any special effort to gain proximity to Tiruvenkatam." SvAmi DeSikan is delighted to receive the anugraham of DayA Devi and wonders "for me who is not possessed of knowledge of what is good and what is not, if DayA Devi confers such a benefit, there is nothing more to ask for. As a consequence of this act, She is hailed by Sri Devi and Bhu Devi." These anubhavams were captured in verses 31 and 32. In the present verse, SvAmi DeSikan provides a practical recourse to Bhagavad anubhavam through an exquisite tribute. In order to enjoy BrahmAnanda anubhavam one must be rid entirely of one's sins. For example, one may wish to learn the sampradAyic teachings of AcAryAs, by listening to upanyAsams by great

personages. However, one's sin-pile could easily preclude this by throwing up any number of obstacles in one's path. Here SvAmi DeSikan describes the state of commoners, who are caught up in a seemingly interminable cycle of sins, with each action only contributing to an increase. SvAmi DeSikan portrays himself as one such sinner and enquires of DayA Devi - "ammA, how do You plan to rid me of this exponentially increasing sin-pile?" DayA Devi answers this through a statement - "This riddance of the sin-pile is not an ordinary task. This will take place in the form of a court room scene." SvAmi DeSikan describes this anubhavam next in terms of highlighting DayA Devi's role as the female attorney, who advances arguments on behalf of the baddha jivans, and enables them to be rid of their sins once and for all, making them perfect receptacles for the grace of Lord Srinivasa.

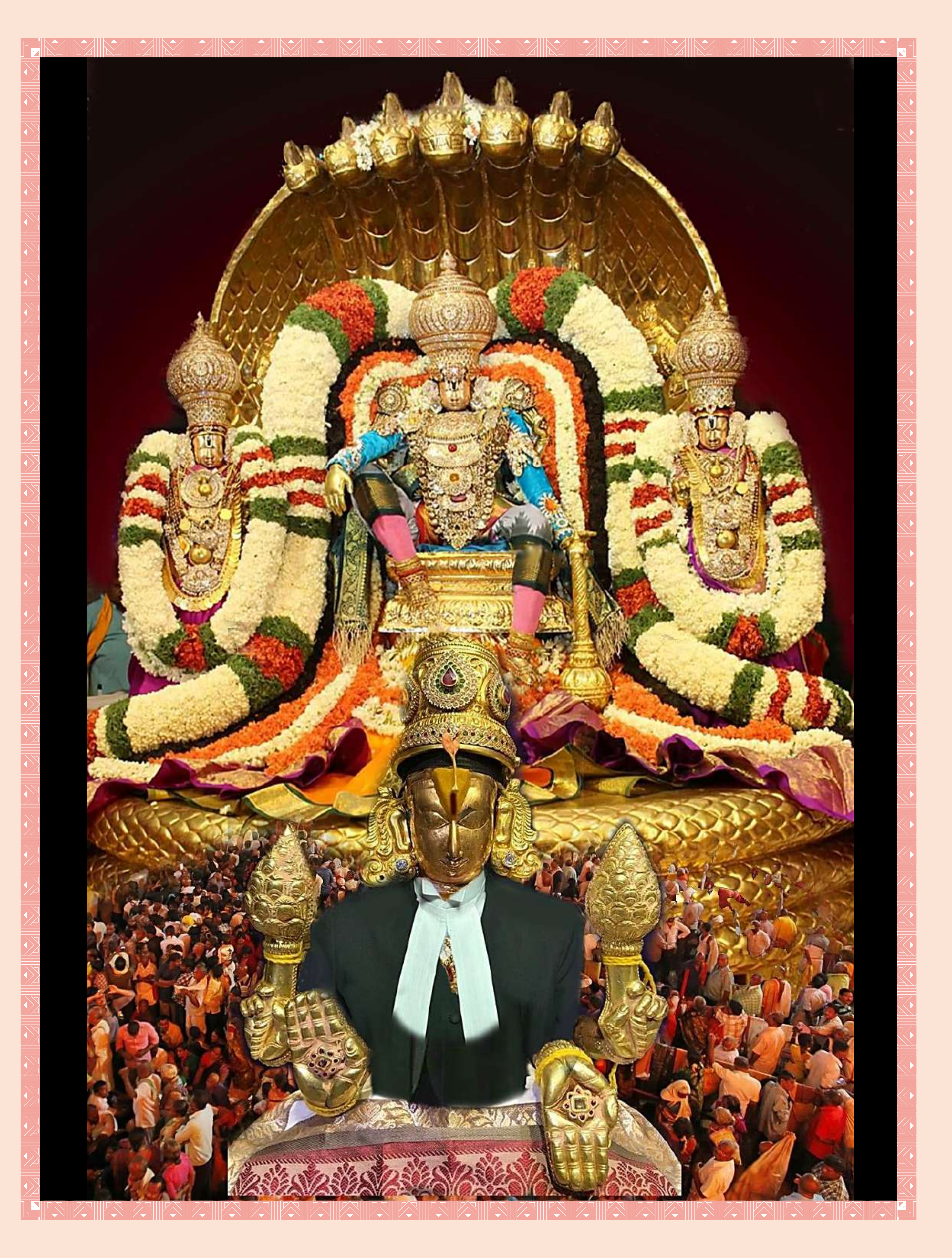
This process is described in this verse and the next.

"phala vitaraNa …. …. padmA sahAyam| mahati guNa ….. …. …. mAmakAnAm|| is the 33rd verse which describes this act of DayA Devi. To set the stage for appreciating the nuances of this verse, one needs to imagine a sessions court, where there is a judge accompanied by his consort (who also has the role of a judge) and has witnesses presenting their evidence and can be subject to cross examination. Here there is a jivan who stands accused of crimes. Of course, there is an array of prosecutors lined up against the accused. There is a considerable sized audience including a grand collection of lawyers, who are present in the court. The accused stands sullen faced. No lawyer is willing to take up the case on behalf of the accused due to the fact that there is overwhelming evidence pointing to the crimes committed by the accused. Hence, it seems like a hopeless case. Therefore, the accused stands alone amidst a formidable array of people lined up to provide evidence against him and put him on the dock. At this juncture DayA Devi enters as the female attorney to represent the jivan against all odds. The court is that of Lord Narayana, who is also the judge. He is accompanied by His Consorts, who also function as assitants to the judge. padma sahAyam is the salutation from this verse which describes the fact that Lord Narayana and His Consorts are seated as judges in this court. The accused is a baddha jivan (this denotes all of us) who has committed innumerable sins. It must be borne in mind that this is a criminal case, which needs to be disposed of swiftly rather than a civil case which can be adjudicated at leisure. Prosecutors in this context are the large number of sins committed by the jivan, which are chomping at the bit to provide testimony to the

crimes of the accused. Normally, one would require witnesses to provide affirmation of the acts on the part of the accused. However, due to the presence of the omniscient Lord as the judge, no additional witnesses are needed. The jury in this court consists of the kalyANa guNams of the Lord sans DayA Devi.

The proceedings in the court are set to commence. The judge needs to be held in great respect for proceedings to have any meaningful traction. In this case the judge is the all-knowing Lord Narayana. Therefore, commencing the proceedings with a salutation such as "My Lord" becomes most appropriate in this instance. The judge has the responsibility of being aware of the rule of the law backwards and forwards. In accordance with the law the crimes of the accused are assessed by the judge and suitable punishment is recommended. Here it is important to note that there is no room for small punishment for grave crimes or grave punishment for small crimes. Again, it must be borne in mind that the law referred to here is the not the regular penal code pertaining to any specific land. Instead, it is the Shruti and Smriti including Vedam, Manu smrti, Yaj~navAlkya smrti and the like, itihAsAs and purANAs. Lord Narayana is a pre-eminent expert when it comes to this. "phala vitaraNa daksham" is the tribute that glorifies the Lord's mastery over the law. More precisely it denotes the Lord's intricate knowledge of the nuances of the law, His omniscience serving as the witness to the crime and His ability to apply the law to mete out appropriate punishment. The next qualification for a competent judge is described in the salutation "pakshapAtAnabhij~nam", namely He is free from any form of bias and hence is an impartial adjudicator. So much so if an accused happens to be related to the judge, the relationship should have no influence on the judge ruling on the merits of the case. If one is willing to bend the law in accordance with one's personal biases or relationships, it renders the judge incompetent to rule on the case.

pakshapAtAnabhij~nam denotes the fact that the Lord treats everyone equally - not exhibiting a special love for some and hatred for others. "karmasvanAdi vishameshu samo dayALuH" is another tribute from SvAmi DeSikan which describes this fact. When it comes to handing out the results of each individual's karma, a number of questions arise. Should the individual experience joys from previous good karma first or sorrow from the bad karma? Should this be early in life or later in life? Then again comes the question, the good karma and bad karma from which birth needs to be considered. How would they be ordered? Only



Lord Narayana the judge in this court has all the answers. He grants each and every jivan the fruits in accordance with their karma. While this is complicated enough for a single jivan, what to say of the complexity when it comes to the non-countably infinite jivans that inhabit the universe? The Lord again is a past master when it comes to this. For example, should a jivan beget human birth or birth in the animal kingdom? What needs to be the consideration for being born as a Brahmana? What is the criterion for birth as a SrIvaishNava? Only the Lord has answers to all these questions.

The salutation "karmasvanAdi vishameshu samo dayALuH" becomes important here again in that it describes the equanimity of the Lord's disposition towards all beings. If one were to examine this in the context of a balance, it would be in perfect equilibrium with the scale not tipping at all on any one side. Namely the individual's karma would be on one plate of the scale and the fruits of the karma being on the other plate of the scale. Thus, the Lord's impartiality ensures that the scales are perfectly balanced. The Lord Himself declares "devAnAm dAnavAnAm ca samAnam adhidaivatam" the import of which is the fact that as the Supreme Lord of the devAs and dAnavAs, He exhibits no special preference for anyone and graces all of them equally. Hence people like Prahlada, and VibhIshaNa, who belonged to the rAkshasa clan, were privy to the viSesha anugraham of Lord Narayana. In this context, the BhagavadgIta salutation "na me dveshyo'sti na priyaH" becomes important. Here Lord Krshna declares that He has neither enmity nor extreme fondness for anyone in that He regards all beings equally. It must be borne in mind that these are common statements. In keeping with this, SvAmi DeSikan describes the judge, Lord Narayana, through the salutation "pakshapAtAnabhij~nam". Later in this verse and in the next, one encounters variations to these common statements in a nuanced manner. Due to the stature of the judge, the case attracts a large audience. The Lord's kalyANa guNams are quite anxious to hear the arguments in the Lord's court and hence line up in the Lord's court. The jury too is quite vast and has taken its seat in this court.

The judge in the court has to have another qualification. This is described in the salutation "praguNam anuvidheyam". Here it must be noted that the judge is a pre-eminent expert over the law (SaastrAs for the purposes of this court). However, not all experts have the patience to listen to arguments from both sides. Instead, they could have made up their mind ahead of time. However, the Lord is unlike this

in that He is easily accessible. Even though He is possessed of every authority to make a unilateral ruling in this case, He patiently hears the arguments advanced by either side. He even seeks out alternate opinions. He is fully endowed with kalyANa guNams. For example, if one considers the SaastrAic knowledge of the most learned among men, it would not even amount to a speck of the Lord's knowledge. Next the term "manu" in the salutation is examined. "manu" denotes the ashTAkshara mantra, which is the first among the three rahasyams that every SrIvaishNava is instructed in during samaSrayaNam. Here the usage "manu" denotes that the Lord is bound by the ashTAkshara mantram. In days of yore, one's mastery over the mantrams had to demonstrated by bringing to fore the presence of the DevatA that is being glorified. For example, uttering the agni upAsana mantram, fire must instantly manifest. By uttering the vAyu devatAtmaka mantram, there should be gentle breeze. Similarly uttering the asTAkshara mantram, one must be able to see the presence of Lord Narayana. *Bound by the ashTAkshara mantram* should therefore be understood in the context that when one contemplates on the Lord through this mantram, He is guaranteed to manifest. This Lord is the judge in this court. The next salutation prApya padmA sahAyam denotes the fact that MahAlakshmI tAyAr is also present beside the judge occupying a judge's seat. Her role is to provide guidance to the Lord on the appropriateness of the arguments presented, and if any points have been overlooked. Both the Lord and MahAlakshmI tAyAr together render the judgement in this case.

In this instance the prosecutors present their case. It must be borne in mind that this is not one or two or a handful, but the entire sin-pile attesting to the SaastrAic violations on the part of the accused. What needs to be done then wonders the Lord? The prosecutors opine nothing - merely leave the accused to suffer the consequences of each of his Sastraic violations. He does not by any means deserve a place in SrIvaikuNTham and the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam. The recommendation for punishment seems like a torrential flow from the prosecutors. The witness to all of these crimes is none other than the Lord Himself, who maintains a careful account of all the deeds of the accused. For example, there are the panca pAtakAs (mahA pApams) such as surApAnam (consumption of alcohol), svarNa haraNam (stealing another's wealth of gold) and the like. The accused has engaged in these crimes. These too are in the same camp as the prosecutors while

attesting to the crime of the accused. The accused merely nods that he has committed these crimes but is helpless to defend himself against the vast litany of charges being pressed against him. At this juncture Lord Narayana enquires if there is anyone willing to represent the accused and offer a possible defense. DayA Devi answers in the affirmative and immediately comes to the rescue of the accused. SvAmi DeSikan describes this in the salutation "yathArham mAnapUrvam daye tvam" namely that DayA Devi prepares to refute the charges on a point-by-point basis. This is done not by using any loopholes but by presenting proper pramANams rooted in the Sastrams. Next the focus is on DayA Devi's arguments in the manner of "prativadasi yathArhaM pApmanAM mAmakAnAm" So far we have seen the prosecutors, their list of charges against the accused, the audience in the court, the judge's position. Now the focus is on DayA Devi's point-by-point refutation. In this regard, the arguments offered by DayA Devi, the position of the law (SaastrAs) and the judge's opinion need to be examined. These are presented in detail in the next verse. Here again the court room scene closely follows the anubhavam of Andal. However, there is a slight difference between Andal's anubhavam and that of SvAmi DeSikan. The difference being that Andal has taken the Lord Himself to court. This is of course all too common in the present day where women routinely take their spouses to court! However, the precedent for this act has been set by Andal herself! The judge in the instance of Andal taking the Lord to court is SvAmi BhAshyakArar. SrI BhAshyakArar is just as a capable a judge due his mastery of the Saastrams and his works such as SrI BhAshyam provide eloquent testimony to this fact.



Andal accuses Lord Krishna of deceiving Her namely "Lord Krishna married Me but then deserted Me. However, I desire residence with Him and no one else. He needs to be punished." This court room scene is more akin to a family court meant for resolving disputes between husband and wife. Andal

then addresses BhAshyakar and enquires, “What is the position of your siddhAntam in regards to what one sees in a dream. Is this not real?” In turn Lord Krishna asks “Where is the proof of My marriage to You? Therefore, I contest this charge.” To this Andal addresses SrI BhAshyakArar and enquires “You have composed works like SrI BhAshyam. Is this not entirely in accordance with the tenets of the Vedam? Therefore, would this not be valid pramANam?” For example, if one encounters a dream wherein one is being pursued by a snake and wakes up to find that this was a dream, it does not take away from the fact that the fear induced by the dream was real and the dream itself was real. If the bad karma was to a small extent the bad experience stops with the dream. However, if the bad karma is excessive, it is entirely likely that the individual could be pursued by the snake in reality! The same is true when it comes to pleasant dreams. Therefore, in keeping with this tenet, everything that takes place in a dream is real. SvAmi BhAshyakArar affirms this statement of Andal. Andal continues “While on the subject of vAraNam Ayiram, at night I saw Lord Krishna in a dream. He was not alone but accompanied by a thousand others. The koora puDavai (nine yards saree that is typically gifted to the bride by the groom and the groom’s sister adorns the bride with this garment) was presented to Me. Uma devi serving in the role of the Lord’s sister adorned Me with the sari. Please ask Lord Krishna if this took place.” Lord Krishna affirms that this took place. Next, Andal says, the wedding was celebrated in the Vedic tradition starting with pANi grahaNam (holding hands between the bride and groom) saptapadi (the seven steps around the sacred fire) and lAja homam (Performance of a homam which solemnizes the wedding. For this the offering of flattened rice in the sacred fire jointly by the bride and groom holding hands is described by Andal through the salutation arimukhan acyutan kai mEl en kaivaittu). “Since this wedding took place in accordance with a Vedic wedding, it is proof that Lord Krishna wedded Me”, declares Andal. “Now upon waking up in the morning, I find that Lord Krishna has deserted Me. SvAmi, you need to unite Me with Lord Krishna.” SvAmi BhAshyakArar enquires of Lord Krishna “Did all of the things documented by Andal take place? Was Her dream real?” Lord Krishna answers in the affirmative. SvAmi BhAshyakArar then declares “this is a straightforward matter, You need to be united with Andal.” To this Lord Krishna states, “I need to put Andal on the stand and ask a few questions of Her. Let us do this tomorrow. After I have examined Andal, I am ready to accept your judgement.” The next day proceedings in this court resume promptly. Andal takes the stand and Lord Krishna now posits a few

questions. “Did I appear in Your dream on the night of vAraNam Ayiram?”. Andal responds in the positive. Lord Krishna then states “Did I not eat with You and spend the whole night with You?” To this too Andal responded in the affirmative. Lord Krishna then declares that, “for marrying You in the dream, I stayed with You and discharged My obligations for marrying You in the same dream. Therefore, I need to do nothing more.” He addressed SvAmi BhAshyakArar and concluded that since the dream was real and His time with Andal was also real no further effort was required on His part to be united with Andal.

Thus, Andal was unsuccessful in Her case. However, in regards to the case taken up by DayA Devi, there is no question of failure. The exact arguments offered by DayA Devi are documented in the next verse.”



SrI Andal and SrI Rangamannar ThirukkalyANam - SrIvillipputtUr

"I stand accused in the court of Lord Srinivasa and Padmavati. My sins are the prosecution team. There is an enlightened jury comprising the kalyANa guNams of the Lord. The Lord is all-knowing. Therefore, witnesses and their evidence are unnecessary. The universal SaastrAs such as the Vedas, Manusmrti and the like constitute the law books and criminal code. Had it not been for DayA Devi who suddenly entered and ventured to appear as a defense counsel for me, I would have faced a harsh sentence. To relate to this at a common level an analogy with the Shakespeare play, Merchant of Venice, may be relevant in that a lady lawyer by name Portia entered out of the blue to defend the accused. This is merely for the sake of making a connection but does no justice to the majesty of the Lord's court, the stature of the judge, the gravity of the matter and the elevated role of DayA Devi. The crux of the arguments put forth by DayA Devi is that the accused is a Prapanna. Hence all sins from prior births have been wiped out at the time of surrender. Sins committed knowingly after Prapatti would be destroyed by undertaking expiatory acts. The sins committed unknowingly incur no consequence. Therefore, the Lord must acquit the accused jivan from all charges.

1. It is important to note that DayA Devi would only plead before the merciful Lord Srinivasa in the case of Prapannas who deserve the Lord's forgiveness.

2. The corollary in the Code of Divine Dispensation is that for transgressions deliberately incurred, one needs to rid oneself of the consequences of these acts by resorting to expiatory acts. When this may not be possible, a prAyascitta prapatti needs to be undertaken. The nuances underlying SaraNAgati are described in the nyAsa trayI as well as in the SaraNAgati dIpikA stotram."



Slokam 34

अनुभवितुमघौघं नालमागामि कालः

प्रशमयितुमशेषं निष्क्रियाभिर्न शक्यम् ।

स्वयमिति हि दये त्वं स्वीकृत श्रीनिवासा

शिथिलित भव भीतिः श्रेयसे जायसे नः ॥

anubhavitum aghaugham nAlamAgami kAlaH

praSamayitum aSesham nishkriyAbhiH na Sakyam|

svayamiti hi daye tvam svIkrta SrInivAsA

Sithilata bhava bhItiH Sreyase jAyase naH||

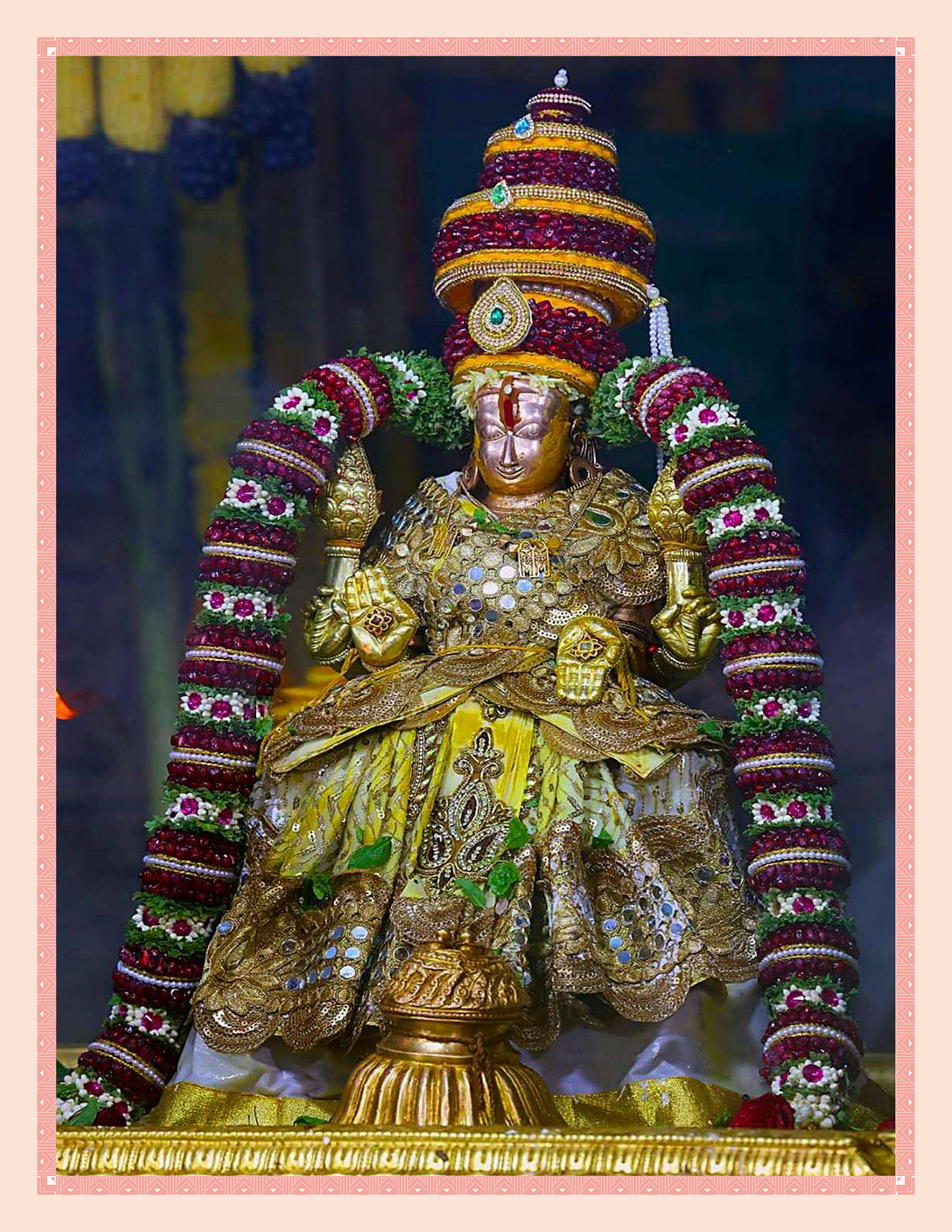


We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmi:

"This verse, "anubhavitum aghaugham … …. Sreyase jAyase naH" presents DayA Devi's arguments on behalf of the accused jivan. There are two means to rid one of sins - one is by experiencing the consequences until the sins are fully expended and the other is by performing expiatory acts. Now the sins from the mountainous sin-pile begin their argument and ask the judge. Let us keep these two things aside for now. Does the Upanishad not say that one can rid oneself of sins or good deeds only by undergoing their consequences? The specific Upanishad statement is "nA bhuktam kshIyate karma kalpa koTi SataIrapi." The effects of Karma have to be necessarily endured regardless of the time it takes, in order for the karma to be fully expended. The Lord affirms this fact. The sins from the sin-pile continue to enumerate the long list of transgressions on the part of the accused. The Vedam declares "sUryAbhyadayA sUryAbhinam" namely sleeping during times of sunrise and sunset incur sin. The sins from the sin-pile affirm that the accused has committed this sin. The consequence of this sin is for one's nails to be deformed for a long period of time. The Lord enquires is it possible that the accused has experienced the results from his sinful acts? To this the sins from the sin-pile respond in unison "Not at all! It is not one or two stray acts on his part but an accumulation of sins over many births spanning aeons." Sri KUrathAzhvAn declares in the VaikuNThastavam – "yad brahmakalpaniyutAnubhave'pyanASyam tat kilbisham srjati janturiha kshaNArdhe, (i.e) one entire Brahma Kalpa is insufficient

to endure the consequences from my sins. However, this is effortlessly wiped out in a trice by Your grace, oh Lord! The sin pile of the accused is mountainous. That which is being endured is only a tiny speck from the mountain. The sins from the sin-pile try to persuade the Lord that the list of sins of the accused is quite extensive. These have to be necessarily expended by undergoing the consequences for these acts, which would entail residence in various narakams. The sins from the sin-pile request the Lord "If Your judgement is that the accused needs to endure the consequences for these transgressions, no further action is called for on Your part. Leave him to us and we will take him to the narakams meant for him" The Lord tries to afford the benefit to the accused by suggesting "Let us examine if the accused has resorted to expiatory acts to rid himself of the consequences of his sins." To this one of the sins from the sin-pile immediately responds that the accused has not undertaken any expiatory acts. The expiatory acts include ganga snAnam, mantra japam, setu snAnam, giving away wealth in charity, candrAyaNam (fasting for 3 days and then surviving on milk alone), and performing homams. The Lord wonders if the accused has resorted to any of these. The salutation "praSamayitum aSesham nishkriyAbhiH na Sakyam" attests to the fact that the sins accumulated by the accused are so great that it is impossible to rid himself of these sins by resorting to expiatory acts. Everyone is scared of the consequences of these sins. Those who resort to expiatory acts perform a homam at the end of which the sins are destroyed via oblation to the fire.

The vedam declares this fact in the salutation "agnim vai jAtam pApma jagrAha" The papams thus expended make agni wonder, what now happens since he has received the papams. The answer to Agni's concern also comes from the Vedam salutation "tam deva AhUtibhiH pApmAnam apAghnan". That is, the sins get shared by all the devatAas, who receive havis from the homam. However, even those Devathas are unable to bear the weight of these sins. To alleviate this, the Vedam declares "AhUtinAm yaj~nena", the yaj~nam itself will absorb this burden. However, even the yaj~nam is unable to bear this burden and therefore submits an appeal. This is answered by the Vedam again as "yaj~nasya daskhiNAbhiH" that is, a lot of dakshina (sambhAvanams and the like) given during the yaj~nam will alleviate the burden of the sins. The expiatory act acquires completion only when dakshina is given away liberally. What then about the sins affecting the dakshina. The Vedam answers this through the salutation "dakshiNAnAm brAhmaNena", which denotes that the sins from dakshiNa get transferred to the recipients, namely the BrAhmaNas that participate in the act. The BrahmaNas too are unable to bear the weight of the sin-pile and seek refuge in the Vedam salutation "brAhmaNasya



candobhiH” that is the BrahmaNa rids himself of the sins by undertaking Veda adhyayanam. Does the sin affect the Vedam? Does the sin affect the vedam? Most definitely not as evidenced by the Vedam salutation “candasAm svAdhyayena apahatapApma svAdhyAyaH”- that is, by repeated svAdhyAyam of one’s own SAkha the sanctity of the Vedam is preserved and therefore no sins accrue. Since the Vedam is blemishless, those who undertake its study in a rigorous manner need to be given ample dakshina. In fact the foremost among dakshinas is that offered to Brahmavits, who have mastered the Vedas. The sins from the sin-pile therefore argue in the Lord’s presence that when such is the tortuous course of expending the results from sins through expiatory acts, and the fact that the accused has not undertaken any such act, he is fit for punishment. The Lord who patiently listened to the arguments from the prosecutors now asks them for a succinct summary of their position. They respond with the statement “The accused has committed innumerable transgressions over aeons. He has not performed any expiatory acts. Nor has he undergone the consequences for any of these. Therefore, he is undeserving of eternal Bhagavad anubhavam. Therefore, You should not grant him moksham. Instead, he needs to undergo the consequences through various births and narakams.” The Lord then turns to the accused and asks if he would like to refute any of these charges. The accused realizes his position and accepts all the charges pressed against him. The Lord enquires of the accused “Is not there anyone to represent You in this case?” The accused responds “No". The case is too weak to gain any representation. All the lawyers are fearful that their reputation will be ruined if they take up this case and represent me.” The Lord makes another call and asks if anyone is willing to represent the accused. At this juncture DayA Devi raises Her hand and states that She is ready to defend the accused. The manner of DayA Devi’s argument is very similar to that offered by the female attorney, Portia, in the Shakespeare play Merchant of Venice. Just as Portia argued that Shylock was entitled to his pound of flesh but no blood, DayA Devi too offers compelling arguments. Let us see how.

DayA Devi first enquires of the judge “My Lord”. Immediately the Lord responds smilingly “Oh Devi what do you seek?” DayA Devi submits Her query “Are the proceedings of this court entirely governed by the prevailing law, namely the Vedam, its associated samhitas, and the like?” The Lord affirms this and declares that He will not act in a manner contrary to the law. DayA Devi then enquires “Oh Lord, do You recall the Vedam statement “varcam prapannam na prati prayaScati” which attests to the fact that even though one may have committed the gravest of sins, when he surrenders (undertakes prapatti) all his sins would be no barrier in

receiving the Lord's grace". DayA Devi requests the Lord to note this point to which the Lord consents. Next DayA Devi continues "The accused has performed SaraNAgati to Your feet. Do You accept this fact My Lord?" The Lord is at His wits' end and wonders "the accused has sinned so much and DayA Devi now mentions that he has performed SaraNAgati to Me. How is this possible?" DayA Devi affirms Her point by stating that She can point to evidence of the accused having performed SaraNAgati. To this the Lord responds, "So be it." SvAmi DeSikan declares in the Devanayaka Panchasat salutation "nishkincanatva dhaninA vibudheSa yena nyastaH svarakshaNa bharastava pAda padme nanAvidha prathita yoga viSesha dhanyAH nArhanti tasya SatakoTi tamAmSa kakshyAm." The inner meaning of this verse is that one who is utterly incapable of undertaking the practice of karma yoga, j~nana yoga, and bhakti yoga but has performed the act of unconditional total surrender to Your Lotus feet occupies a most elevated stature in that those who undertake the practice of these yogas do not equate to even one part in a million compared to this person. This is the import of Upanishadic statements. DayA Devi enquires of the Lord whether He accepts this statement. The Lord answers in the affirmative and enquires of DayA Devi "Who is the witness for this SaraNAgati?" DayA Devi responds with the statement "deSika sAkshi - namely the Acaryan who administered BharanyAsam for him as well his pUrvacAryAs will provide the requested testimony as evidenced by the salutation "tvanmUla deSika kaTAksha nipAda mAdhyam". The Lord then wonders what is the purpose of this SaraNAgati? DayA Devi is quick to point out that the SaraNAgati was performed solely for the purpose of "etat dehAvasAnemAm tvatpAdam prApaya svayam", namely at the end of his life, he seeks eternal residence in SrIvaikuNTham and uninterrupted service to Your lotus feet." DayA Devi continues "Now that his life on earth is over, is it not Your responsibility to grant him the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam?" The Lord answers "unequivocally yes". The Lord then asks DayA Devi how She rebuts the argument of the prosecution "nA bhuktam kshIyate karma kalpa koTi SataIrapi." DayA Devi responds by stating "neither has the accused experienced the effects of his sins nor has he performed expiatory acts. However, this cannot be stated in isolation. This needs to be examined along with a few auxiliary statements from the Vedam. For example, if one looks at kAlam as documented by the Vedam, by the time the accused undergoes the consequences for any one of his plentiful sins, kAlam itself will run out as eloquently stated in this verse anubhavitum aghaugham nAlamAgami kAlaH." What then about the prAyaScitta karmAs (expiatory acts) he needs to undertake? DayA Devi answers this again in the same manner as above, namely that by the time the accused is done



with the completion of the prAyaScitta karmAs, kAlam itself will run out. Therefore, due to lack of time the accused is unable to perform the expiatory rites. Furthermore, performance of expiatory rites requires another birth and always carries the risk of lapses in kramams (procedural norms). This would accrue additional sins to the sin-pile. Therefore, it is pointless to require this of the accused. It must be kept in mind that lapses while performing nitya karmas such as sandhyavandanam do not accrue sin. However, expiatory acts performed with a specific objective are impacted negatively by procedural lapses. The prosecutors then ask DayA Devi, "what is the recourse for us?" DayA Devi answers "You have no place here. You need to leave immediately." To this, the prosecutor responds "Your arguments are contrary to the law from the looks of it. I do not understand this." DayA Devi responds "I shall now highlight from the SaastrAs themselves the position I am recommending". The Upanishad states "aSva iva romANi vidhUya pApam" and "tat sukrta dushkrte dhunute tasya sukrtam hrdasyadhikrtyAm dviSanta pApa karmaNAm" namely that those mahans who have performed extensive Veda adhyayanam and those who have performed SaraNAgati, cast off their sins at the end of their lives in the manner of a horse shaking its head to rid itself of dirt. In the case of prapannas, the residual karma is distributed among the associates of the prapanna with those being well inclined to the Prapanna inheriting the good karma, while those who are inimical to the Prapanna inherit the bad karma. In another place the Vedam states "pushkara-palasa apo" further categorizes the sins in terms of those committed prior to performance of SaraNAgati and those committed after the performance of SaraNAgati. These are further classified into two groups - those committed knowingly and those committed unknowingly. DayA Devi continues, "When it comes to the sins prior to SaraNAgati, these known as sancitha karma are destroyed by the SaraNAgati itself in the manner of a moth devoured by a fire. This statement is found in the Vedam itself." The Upanishad statement is "sarve pApmanAH pradUyante". What about the sins committed after SaraNAgati. DayA Devi again quotes from the Vedam "yatha pushkara-palasa apo na slishyante" which states that these sins do not taint the SaraNAgata. It is in the manner of water droplets on a lotus flower which do not stick. Then does it mean that performance of SaraNAgati is a license to engage in sinful acts as per one's whim? Here too further classification of the sins arises. Those that are committed unknowingly do not have any effect. Those committed knowingly are expended by first expressing regret, then resolving not to repeat this, resolving to perform the necessary expiatory act and finally completion of the

expiatory act. In the aparAdhaparihara adhikAram of SrImad RahasyatrayasAram SvAmi DeSikan declares -

prArabdhetara pUrvapApamakhilam prAmadIkam cottaram

nyAsena kshapayan anabhyupagata-prArabdha-khaNDam ca naH |

dhipUlrevottara-pApmanAm ajananAt jate api tannishkrteH

koTilye satim SishyA api anaghayan kroDIkarotmi prabhuH ||

The result of some karma is responsible for our present birth as a SrIvaishNavan and enabled us to resort to prapatti. Except for prArabdha karma, namely the karma that has started yielding fruit, all other sinful acts committed prior to SaraNAgati are destroyed during the process of Prapatti. When it comes to prArabdha karma, there is the abhyupagata prArabdha karma (that which is accepted voluntarily) and anabhyupagata prArabdha karma (that which accrues involuntarily). Even the latter which are the sins that are unknowingly committed post prapatti are destroyed. When it comes to abhyupagata prArabdha karma, the sins that are performed knowingly, what happens? These are expended using the mechanism described earlier in terms of expressing regret and undertaking expiatory acts. Failing this, the individual is subject to laghu (light) daNDanam (punishment). This can take the form of a disobedient wife and children, bodily ailments, loss of eyesight, loss of hearing and the like until the committed sins are fully expended within the lifetime of the individual and renders him fit for Moksham. DayA Devi states "All this is documented in Your rule book, My Lord!". DayA Devi continues " My Lord! Since the accused has fulfilled all the conditions stated in Your rule book, he meets the requirements for gaining Your grace and hence must be granted moksham. Thus, I request that the arguments from the prosecution be thrown out and the accused be graced forthwith." The Lord consents to DayA Devi's request and dismisses the case right away. There are instances where judges are spellbound by the arguments of certain attorneys that they completely come under their sway. Here SvAmi DeSikan highlights the fact that Lord Narayana is held captive by the arguments of DayA Devi and completely comes under Her sway. "svayamiti hi daye tvam svIkrta SrInivAsA Sithilata bhava bhItiH" is the salutation from this verse which describes this fact. The act of DayA Devi rids one of the fears of samsAra. This is the elevated role of DayA Devi who only has our wellbeing in mind. If not for Her grace it is impossible to get the brahmAnanda anubhavam - the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple upon getting moksham."

It is also helpful to quote from the anubhavam of H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan SvAmi from the PirATTiyum pirAnum ceyda upakAram upanyAsam. In particular, the focus is on the argument advanced by DayA Devi "Oh SvAmi, You incarnated as Rama to grace the world! In Your vrttAntam of Ramayanam one can see the list of sinners is quite exhaustive. This includes exalted personages such as Bharata (who declined to heed the Lord's command to rule the kingdom), Lakshmana (who declared aham sarvam karsShyami), Sita PirATTi (due to BhAgavata apacAram towards Lakshmana), Anjaneya (for suggesting that he would carry the Pativrata StrI, Sita devi, on his back) and sure the Lord himself (for placing Sita in a precarious position enabling Her abduction by Ravana). In the words of Sita PirATTi Herself it is documented that na kaScit naparAdhyati (there is none that has not sinned). However, did any of them suffer punishment for their sins? Absolutely not! Instead, they were all privy to Your visesha anugraham. The same principle used to grace them should also apply to the accused and grant him moksham, freeing him from his sins once and for all!"

Next we quote from the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmi.

"DayA Devi continues Her defense. The key idea is cast in the form of an appeal to Her. Oh DayA Devi! You convince the court how my arrays of sins are in large heaps, which could never be expended by my suffering. You plead that the Lord has to "suffer" me by His forgiveness. KshamA is kshamA. His forgiveness is what is adequate. You volunteer to champion my case. Lord Srinivasa will heed Your words. Your influence on Him is complete and enduring. By this reason, our fears of samsAra will vanish. Our hope for moksham becomes strong and meaningful. Indeed, You exist for our wellbeing and salvation. You render a great service to us on Your own accord. I would therefore assert that Your sole purpose is to ensure our salvation and secure the benefit of eternal bliss. But for Your pleading on our behalf, and that too of Your own accord, we would have been doomed."



Slokam 36

परहितमनुकम्पे भावयन्त्यां भवत्यां

स्थिरमनुपधि हार्दं श्रीनिवासो दधानः।

ललित रुचिषु लक्ष्मी भूमिनीळासु नूनं

प्रथयति बहुमानं त्वत्प्रतिच्छन्द बुद्ध्या॥

parahitam anukampe bhAvayantyAm bhavatyAm

sthiramanupadhi hArdam SrInivAso dadhAnaH|

lalita rucishu lakshmI bhUmi nIlAsu nUnam

prathayati bahumAnam tvatpraticchanda buddhyA||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin:

"DayA Devi now poses a question to SvAmi DeSikan. "Oh SvAmi! You have paid glowing tributes to Me. However, I feel that the reality is quite different. Please shed light on this after hearing Me." SvAmi DeSikan enquires "What is it that bothers You, oh Mother?" To this DayA Devi replies "Everyone uses the Vedic statement SraddhayA devaH devatvam aSnute - namely, the Lord acquires devatvam (His status as a Deva) only on account of association with tAyAr. This is echoed by SvAmi NammAzhvAr pAsuram in the akalakillEn iraiyum enRu as well. Therefore, it appears that all name and fame for the Lord comes about entirely on account of His eternal association with tAyAr. Even when Lord Srinivasa is addressed as akhilANDa koTi brahmANDa nAyakan, it is only in the context of SrI bhUmi nILa sameta. Thus, only His consorts Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi and Nila devi are recognized to be the cause of the Lord's supremacy. Nowhere is DayA Devi mentioned let alone DayA Devi sameta SrInivAsa. However, You glorify Me as the be all and end all for everything that Lord Srinivasa accomplishes. How should your position be reconciled with that of the commonly held perception? (It must be borne in mind that this is a rhetorical question posed by DayA Devi. She is fully well aware of SvAmi DeSikan's mastery of the SaastrAs. It is only Her intent to bring the full prabhAvam of SvAmi DeSikan that causes Her to raise this question). SvAmi DeSikan laments "ammA, Your greatness is well known and world famous.

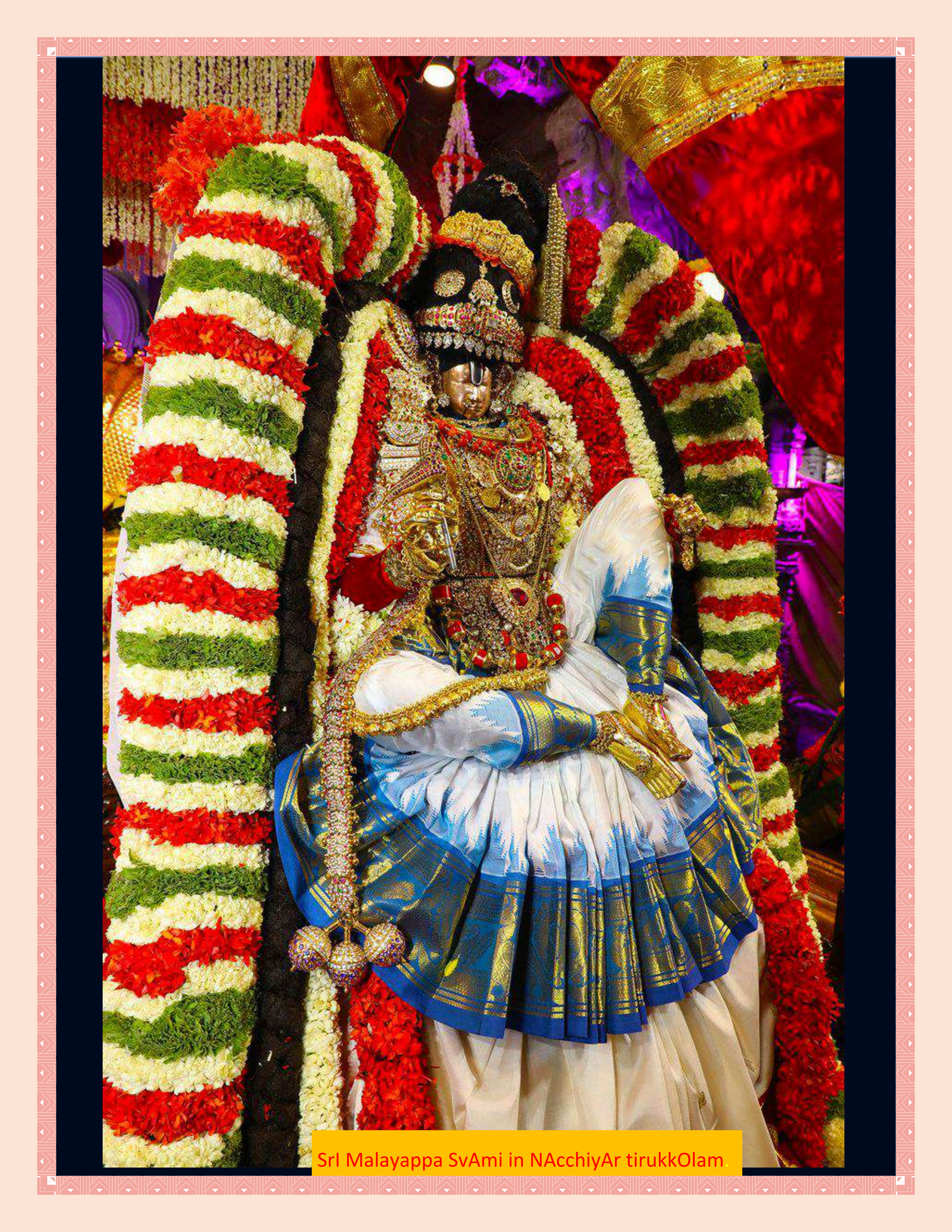


The Lord views the consorts Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi, and Neela Devi as the images of DayA Devi.

However, You have decreed that I must bring this out. Therefore, aDiyEn once again submits this tribute the bahumati that You have is matchless"

parahitam anukampe …. ….. buddhyA. The sambodhanam here is anukampe (Oh DayA Devi!) "parahitam bhAvayantyA bhavatyA." It is only in You that Lord Srinivasa has complete confidence. Let there be no doubt about that. Your essential nature is that for para, namely beings other than oneself or even enemies,You only think of their wellbeing. It appears as if Your entire existence is solely to ensure the wellbeing of these other beings or enemies. In the absence of DayA Devi, there is no one to think about their wellbeing. When Sita Devi was in the aSokavanam, Ravana approached Her and requested Her to become the queen of his inner apartments. Even though, Ravana approached Her with evil intentions, She only had his wellbeing at heart and addressed him as "Oh Ravana! Please listen to this carefully since this is in your best interest. Do not engage in this heinous task which will guarantee your ruin. Please perform SaraNAgati at the Feet of Lord Rama. However, your ego may not permit this. Therefore, at least please be friendly towards him. The Ramayanam salutation reflecting this message is "mitramaupayikam kartum rAmaH sthAnam parIpsatA tena maItrI bhavati te yadhi jivitumicchasi" (If you desire to live long please befriend Rama). This concern for the wellbeing of even the sworn enemy is possible only for You, Oh DayA Devi! It is this quality of Yours that greatly endears you to Lord Srinivasa.

sthiramanupadhi hArdam SrInivAso dadhAnaH becomes an important salutation to examine next. Here it must be observed that if one renders great help or service in times of distress to another, the latter is likely to remember this act of help with gratitude and have a great liking for the former. This could possibly wane with time. However, with regards to Lord Srinivasa it is a given that inherently, He has great regard for DayA Devi. She need not do anything to earn this. For example, if the consorts of the Lord were viewed as gems in a garland the central pendant for which is Lord Srinivasa himself, He views the consorts Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi, and Neela Devi as the images of DayA Devi. Upon beholding a reflection in a mirror one cannot feel jealous. In the NAcchiyAr tirukOlam, the Lord is in a palanquin (pallaki). Opposite to the Lord is a huge mirror. The sevai is one of enjoying the Lord through the reflection in the mirror. It is common to see the mirrors arranged in Srirangam. During the procession for Perumal at specific times, the mirrors are open for viewing Perumal through the reflection. Nobody regrets the fact that scores of devotees enjoy this reflection (kannADi aRai) and do not directly prostrate before the Lord. In a like manner, the Lord when it comes to His relationship with His consorts, Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi, and Neela Devi, verily views Them as a mirror image



SrI Malayappa SvAmi in NAcchiyAr tirukkOlam.



The Lord’s doting love for SrI DayA Devi is in His heart!

of You, oh DayA Devi!" lalita rucishu lakshmI bhUmi nIlAsu nUnam is the salutation that describes this fact further. Namely, the beauty or even the very thought process of the consorts of the Lord is solely guided by DayA Devi. Since these consorts are viewed as reflections of DayA Devi, SvAmi DeSikan asks where is the need for DayA Devi to regret the fact that She is not glorified separately? prathayati bahumAnam tvatpraticchanda buddhyA is the salutation that refers to the fact that the very glorification of the consorts of the Lord stems from the fact that They are mirror images or reflections of DayA Devi. Otherwise, there would be nothing worthy of glorification in these consorts. SvAmi DeSikan asks the rhetorical question "Are You satisfied now, Oh DayA Devi, that it is entirely on Your account that the consorts of the Lord receive praise?" bahumAnaM prathayati is the salutation that brings out the fact that the greatness of the DayA Devi lies in the fact that the Lord Himself regards His consorts as mirror images of DayA Devi. It is to bring out this subtle point explicitly that this salutation is in place. Therefore, the Lord's fondness for His consorts is verily an expression of His great regard and reverence for DayA Devi. It must be borne in mind that DayA Devi and PaadukA Devi arise from SvAmi DeSikan's intense anubhavam of the Lord's Daya and give Them a live form, resulting in glorious tributes of DayA Satakam and Paaduka Sahasram documenting a samvadam (a friendly debate) between SvAmi DeSikan and the Devis."

We then quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patracharier SvAmin:

"DayA Devi poses a question in this verse to SvAmi DeSikan. "Oh Swamin, you praise Me to the heavens. How do you think it conforms to the actual situation of the Lord being adorned in the company of the three consorts Lakshmi, Bhumi, and Neela? What do you think of My status is in relation to Them, if you would like to convince the devotees that My influence on Srinivasa is so overwhelming as to dictate to Him as you have been saying?" SvAmi's reply come through as "Well is it to envision a lovely pearl necklace, so to say, with the Lord, the three consorts adorning it as bright components. All the worlds venerate this spectrum. But the Lord regards the three as mere images, replicas of Your own self. You shine by Your extreme consideration of the good of all. The Lord has spontaneous doting love for You, regardless of what You achieve for Him. His infatuation for You is in heart, though judiciously silent and taciturn. It progressively increases as You do good to more and more devotees. There is thus no question of rivalry or contest between You and the three consorts. The mode in which He certifies Your role and cardinality in iconographic convention is lovely."

Slokam 37

वृषगिरि सविधेषु व्याजतो वास भाजां
दुरित कलुषितानां दूयमाना दये त्वम्।
करण विलय काले कान्दिशीक स्मृतीनां
स्मरयसि बहुलीलं माधवं सावधाना॥

vrshagiri savidheshu vyAjato vAsa bhAjAm
durita kalushitAnAm dUyamAnA daye tvam|
karaNa vilaya kAle kAndiSIka smrtInAm
smarayasi bahulIlam mAdhavam sAvadhAnA||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin. "In an invocatory Slokam in the guru paramparA prabhAvam, H.H. Sri Periya Parakala SvAmi has declared nAnyam manye guru SreshTham SrImad vedAnta deSikAt sat sampradAya dhanyebhyaH nAnyAn dhanyASca sajjanAt, which means that there is no AcAryan greater than SvAmi DeSikan (since he is an avatAram of Lord Srinivasa). Even greater is the glory of the followers of his sat-sampradAyam, who enjoy SvAmi DeSikan's SrI sUktis. In a like manner, we have been blessed to enjoy the esoteric meanings of the DayA Satakam verses. In the previous verse it was established that the consorts of the Lord are viewed as mirror images of DayA Devi. Next the glory of DayA Devi who resides alongside the Lord of Seven Hills is highlighted. Specifically, Her act of compassion towards those who have by sheer happenstance taken residence in the vicinity of Tiruvenkatam hill is glorified. This also brings out the greatness of taking residence near the Venkatam hill. vrshagiri savidheshu …. …. … mAdhavam sAvadhAnA is the salutation in this 37th verse. In verse 31, SvAmi DeSikan submitted a prayer to DayA Devi to gain residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill so that he could have the bhAgyam of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam while he was able bodied. Let this be so on the one hand. On the other hand, there could be others who by sheer accident gain residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. This verse highlights the mahopakAram of DayA Devi towards such jivans. vyanjayatsu pratItaiH vAsam AsAdayeyam is the salutation from verse

31 that is specifically alluded to here. The prayer inherent in this salutation is that DayA Devi and Lord Srinivasa need to bless me so that I gain residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill and behold the hill streams emanating there with copious flow of water as the flow of DayA Devi to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Not only this, DayA Devi also graces others who may end up in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill for other reasons. vrshagiri savidheshu is the salutation from this verse which is first examined. The glory of the Vrshagiri is matchless as described in the Slokam venkaTAdri samAm sthAnam brahmANDe nAsti kincana venkaTeSa samo devo na bhUto na bhavishyati. There is no place that is equal to the VenkatAdri. Nor is there a deity equal to Lord Srinivasa. NammAzhvAr performs his mangaLASasanam for this place of the Lord's residence through the salutation tiladam ulakukkAi ninRa tiruvEnkaTattu emperumAne. This is captured in the salutation vrshagiri savidheshu, namely let alone residence in the foothills of the Venkatam hill even a place that is a few km away from the hill has the same effect. If we go to a kshetram just as any pious acts are magnified and yield great fruits, so too the effects of sinful acts committed at these kshetrams bear consequences that are increased several fold. Therefore, when one is undertaking kshetrADanam (pilgrimage to a holy place) one must avoid committing all forms of sin. It is well known that when undertaking the performance of a yAgam (sacrifice), one must not utter falsehood (anrta vAdanam). Does this sanction engaging in falsehood at other times? Absolutely not. "nAnrtam vadet" and "satyam vada" are the Vedam salutations which instruct one in the right mode of conduct. The utterance of a lie during performance of a yAgam is several fold greater than speaking falsehood under normal times. Therefore, the consequences for such an act too increase multi-fold. Therefore, one performs sankalpam not to utter falsehood when engaged in performance of a yAgam. In a like manner, while visiting a divya deSam, one must not engage in speaking falsehood. One's conduct needs to be blemishless. There may be some who for sheer sustenance of their livelihood or for some other reason take residence in the vicinity of Venkatam hill. They may not be aware of the SaastrAic prescriptions and may thus be engaged in apacArams. DayA Devi beholds this and is greatly worried. She thinks, "These ignorant beings are committing numerous apacArams at a divya deSam oblivious to the consequences of their actions. How can I redeem them?" durita kalushitAnAm dUyamAnA daye tvam is the salutation that describes this fact. DayA Devi resolves "There is only one way out for these beings. I shall do this since this is certain to pave the way for their elevation."


SrI DayA Devi alone can influence and induce Lord Srinivasa to confer His grace

What is the way out? The PurANAs are replete with instances when even the worst sinner during his last moments thinks of the Lord, his sins are destroyed and he gains moksham. In fact this is the greatness of KaSi kshetram. One who goes to KaSi during his last moments receives the upadeSam of the RAma tAraka mantram from Rudra (who serves as an AcArya), the presiding deity ViSvanAtha at KaSi. Consequently, at their last moments these individuals are engaged in contemplation of Lord rAma through the rAma tAraka mantram. Hence, they gain moksham. kASi maraNAn muktiH is the PurANic statement that documents this fact. In a like manner, DayA Devi comes to the rescue of those who may have gained residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill due to some reason or the other and are engaged in committing numerous apacArams. karaNa vilaya kAle kAndiSIka smrtInAm smarayasi bahulIlam mAdhavam sAvadhAnA is the salutation that describes the act of DayA Devi. When the jivan is in his last moments, the indriyas begin to fail (karaNa vilaya kAle) as documented in the statement vAngmanasi sampadyate. During this state, it is sufficient for these beings to engage in thoughts of the Lord since the manas (mind) is functional. However, even this becomes impossible. At this juncture DayA Devi intervenes and ensures that these beings are engaged in thoughts of the Lord of Seven Hills. Periya Azhvar in his mangalasasanam declares "appOtAikippOtE sollivaIttEn" attesting to the fact that during his last moments he may not be in a state to engage in dhyanam of the Lord and therefore, requests the Lord to come to his aid at the critical juncture and enable him to think of the Lord. In the matter of antima smrti (thinking of the Lord during one's final moments) there are a few questions in terms of who needs to have this and for whom this is not required. For Bhakti yogis, this is a must because the next birth/anubhavam is dependent on the thoughts that prevail during one's final moments. However, for Prapannas, it is not necessary. This is due to the fact that the Lord ensures antima smrti for the Prapanna without any effort on his part. This is brought about by DayA Devi. KulaSekara AzhvAr in the MukundamAlA stotram declares "prANa prayANa samaye kapha vAta pittaiH kanThAvarodhana vidhau smaraNam kutaste." The import of this verse is that "during my last moments, I will be confronted by issues of cough, gas, and the like making it impossible for me to think of You. Therefore, I submit the prayer now that You must ensure the antima smrti in my final moments." The AzhvAr further elaborates "cintayAmi harimeva santatam manda manda hasitAnanAmbujam nandagopatanayam parAtparam nAradAdi muni brnda vanditam"meaning, "I am always engaged in contemplation of Lord Narayana. The Lord has a smiling face resembling a lotus. He is the Supreme Being who incarnated as the son of

Nandagopa and is saluted by Rishis such as Narada." Thus antima smrti calls for effort on one's part. However, for those who take residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill, DayA Devi on Her own accord ensures this benefit. dushTendriya vadhAScitram nrNAm iyat kalmaSaIrvratam tadanta kAle samsiddhim vyApi nArayaNAlaye is the salutation that refers to the fact that those who live in the vicinity of a divya deSam, even though they may commit numerous sins on account of their indriyas, are guaranteed of an elevated state after their final moments. How so? Due to Bhagavad smaraNam. mAdhavam sAvadhAna smarayasi is the salutation in this verse that documents the help of DayA Devi. Namely, with utmost care, DayA Devi ensures that the jivan resident in the vicinity of the Venkatam Hill (for some reason or the other besides Bhagavad Kaimkaryam) gains the benefit of smaraNam of the Lord, who is forever associated with MahAakshmI. This also serves as an appeal to the Lord to help the jivan during his last moments with an impassioned plea "this jivan is engaged in Your thoughts during his last moments. Therefore, please do not mete out punishment to him. Instead, please bestow Your grace upon him."



In the GopalavimSati stotram, SvAmi DeSikan offers the tribute "adharAhita cAruvamSa nAlAH makuTAlambi mayUra pinchamAlaH harinIla SilA vibhanga nIlaH pratibhAH santu mama antima prayANe." In the final moments one needs to have antima smrti and be engaged in thoughts of Lord Narayana. Who should be the focus of this? SvAmi DeSikan answers it is undoubtedly Lord Krishna who has His flute, whose head is adorned by the peacock feather, and whose radiance is similar to the Indraneela stone. To this day there is a specialty about the PuraTTAsi Sravanam sevai at Kanchipuram. When SvAmi DeSikan arrives for mangaLASAsanam, in accordance with the salutation "karigirimEl ninRu kAkkinRAnE" there is no difference between Lord Krishna and tEpperumAL (SrI VaradarAja). The utsava

Perumal is therefore adorned with Sauri and a peacock feather to ensure that Perumal provides sevai to SvAmi DeSikan as Lord Krishna in accordance with SvAmi's tribute. Great AcAryAs have been completely overwhelmed by the thoughts of the Lord in their final moments. This anubhavam should become available to all is the intent. This is brought about by DayA Devi. The Lord declares in the BhagavadgIta "ahamsmarAmi madbhaktam nayAmi paramAm gatim" - I think of My BhaktAs and ensure that they get the supreme state - is the import of this tribute. Therefore, it becomes clear that the Lord is thinking of us. However, who thinks of Perumal? It is only on account of DayA Devi that people think of Perumal. Thus, even for beings who have taken residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill due to some pretext or the other and engaged in egregious violations of the sastras resulting in a mountainous sin-pile due to the dushTa indriyAs, DayA Devi ensures that they are recipients of the Lord's grace and are saved from punishment. This gives rise to a question why does DayA Devi need to intercede on behalf of these jivas. Afterall the Lord is omniscient. Does He not know that these jivans need to be graced? The answer to this comes about from the avatAra kAraNam of Lord Srinivasa. mAyAvi paramAnandam tyaktva vaikuNTham uttamam SvAmi puShkaraNI tIrE ramayA sahamodate. The playground for the Lord is not SrIvaikuNTham but the banks of SvAmi PushkaraNi. While engaged in His numerous acts of sport at the Venkatam hill what happens if He forgets the plight of the said jivans? It is for this purpose alone DayA Devi maintains a careful watch and issues a timely reminder to the Lord that these jivans need to be rescued. This is the mahopakaram rendered by DayA Devi."

Next we quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmin:

"There are people who happen to live in the precincts of the Hill of Venkatesa. Neither by choice nor by own love of God would they have chosen this residence. He may live his whole life in utter disregard of the dayA mUrti that Lord Srinivasa is. The man has no attainments, no bhakti, no sense of self-upliftment either. A time comes when he has to die. No one remembers this man except DayA Devi. She has throughout his life mourned that he was in no mood to redeem himself. Nevertheless, She cannot let him die and go to the narakas reserved for sinners. Therefore, what does She contrive? She makes Lord Srinivasa remember this man at the critical moment. DayA Devi has to remind Him because She alone is aware of the jivan's pitiable plight. She alone can influence and induce Lord Srinivasa to confer His grace. The Lord remembers him and ensures that he gains the elevated state of residence in the Lord's abode (Paramapadam). This is a phenomenal accomplishment of DayA Devi."

Slokam 38

दिशि दिशि गति विद्भिर्देशिकैर्नीयमाना

स्थिरतमनुकम्पे स्त्यान लग्ना गुणैस्त्वम्।

परिगत वृषशैलं पारमारोपयन्ती

भव जलधि गतानां पोत पात्री भवित्री ॥

diSi diSi gatividbhiH deSikaiH nIyamAnA

sthirataram anukampe styAna lagnA guNaistvam|

parigata vrshaSailam pAram AropayantI

bhava jaladhi gatAnAm pota pAtrI bhavitrI||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin. "In this verse the help rendered by AcAryAs to DayA Devi is documented. In a previous verse, the role of DayA Devi as the kavacam for Lord Srinivasa, when He was facing potential defeat, was discussed. In some instances, it is possible that DayA Devi Herself could encounter defeat. In these instances, there is one person that renders assistance to DayA Devi. krpeca pratikartavyam is the essential nature of DayA Devi. In the context of the previous verse, this tribute could acquire the connotation that under some pretext, certain individuals have taken residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. As a consequence, DayA Devi remembers this act, and directs the Lord's grace towards them. This could easily be seen as a favor bestowed in exchange for their taking residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. However, this does no justice to DayA Devi, whose inherent nature is to help elevate all supplicants - let alone supplicants, even adversaries as seen in prior verses. This inherent nature of DayA Devi was glorified. kAndiSIka smrtInAm from the previous verse refers to the defeat of one's consciousness. Namely, DayA Devi comes to the rescue of one who is utterly helpless. When DayA Devi attains a state where Her defeat is seemingly imminent, there is someone who comes to Her rescue. Who is this person? This is revealed in the present 38th verse, diSi diSi gati vidbhiH …. …..pota pAtrI bhavitrI. Here DayA Devi is described as the raft that enables beings caught up in the turbulent waters of the samsAric ocean and being tossed hither and thither to cross over and reach the other shore. A mere raft by itself is of no use. There needs to be a boatman to steer the raft. The boatman in this context are

glorified as AcAryAs. It is very easy for commoners to get lost while traversing the mighty ocean, especially at night, and lose sense of direction. However, the AcAryAs who are described in terms of the boatman are endowed with knowledge and expertise to avoid the pitfalls and successfully take the boat to the other shore. The samsAric ocean is like the ratnAkara, where tidal waves are cresting and engulfing all comers in a trice. The other shore in this context is the Venkatam hill. Directing suffering beings from their present state in the samsAric ocean to the other shore is the task of the boatman. The raft has been described as DayA Devi. The details of the analogy are examined further. The rowing of the raft has to take place with the row tightly anchored to the raft. Otherwise, it becomes impossible to reach the destination. DayA Devi is associated with each gunam of the Lord. This DayA Devi forms the raft that enables crossing of the Samsaric ocean.

The characteristic of the samsSric ocean is best understood from the MukundamAla stotram tribute of SrI KulaSekara AzhvAr --

bhavajaladhigatAnAm dvandva vAtAhatAnAm

sutaduhitrkaLatra trANa bhArArditAnAm |

vishamavishayatoye majjatAmaplavAnAm

bhavatu SaraNameko visShNupoto narANAm ||

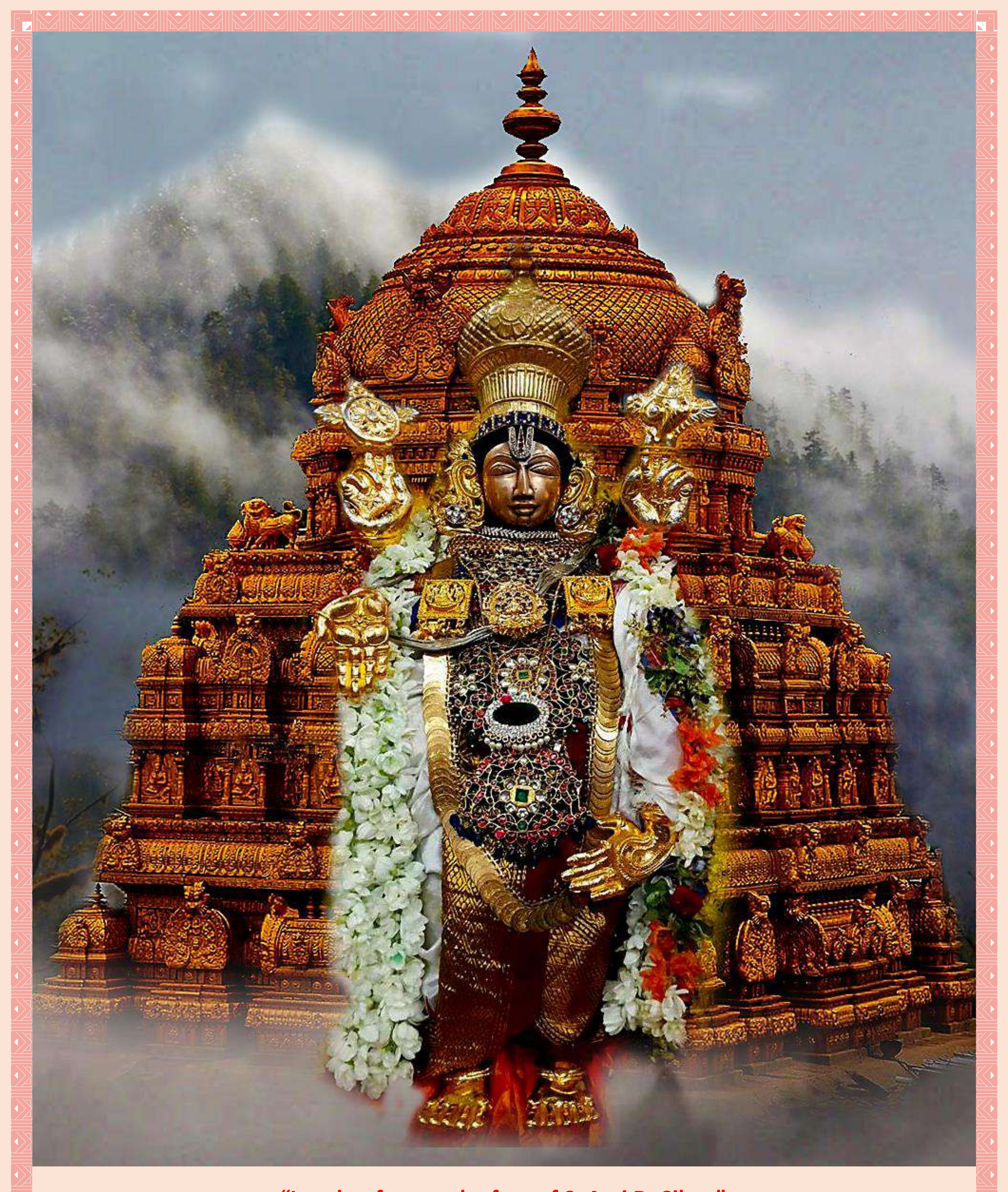
In this verse, Lord VishNu is described as the raft meant for crossing the samsAric ocean. First let us examine the characteristic of the Ocean. SamsAram consisting of the three kinds of tApam (Difficulties: AdhyAtmika - arising from the body, Adibhautika - arising from other inhabitants such as reptiles and fearful animals, and AdidaIvika - arising from natural forces such as wild fires, tornados, strong winds and the like) is a vast ocean. Not only is the ocean vast, there are strong gale force winds blowing. These are described as dvandvam - two in number - asanAyapipAse Soka moham jarA mrtyu are the characteristics of these winds (hunger, thirst, sorrow, ignorance causing one to think that the Lord's property is his own, old age and death). The ocean has 6 Urmis (shaT Urmi) or six types of waves. pipasa - thirst which cannot be controlled. duHkham denotes sorrow, which constantly accompanies one immersed in samsAram. moham denotes ignorance, causing the jivan to mistakenly believe that the Lord's property is his own. Namely, the use of indriyAs, which are meant for contemplating on the Lord, for one's own purpose. jarA denotes the onset of old age, while mrtyu denotes death. Quite often aging is associated with getting closer to death and hence these two are grouped together. Therefore, it is common practice to mask the process of aging in the

present day through cosmetics. These waves are coming successively one after another.



Lord VishNu is described as the raft meant for crossing the samsAric ocean

In the above MukundamAla salutation "bhavajaladhigatAnAm dvandva trANa bhArArditAnAm ", Sri KulaSekara AzhvAr describes the plight of jIvans caught in this samsAric ocean. Namely, they are saddled with a great burden - the need to protect one’s family members, ensuring that their children are married, and the children need to be educated, kids need to be taken to school and the like. Thus, an ever-increasing list of commitments confronts one immersed in samsaram. This burden weighs on the jIvan so much that it precludes him from even thinking of Lord Narayana. The next salutation in the MukundamAla verse “vishamavishayatoye majjatAmaplavAnAm bhavatu SaraNameko vishNupoto narANAm” elaborates on the fact that the jIvan perhaps thinks that the waters of this ocean will recede somewhat allowing him to cross the ocean. However, these waters are quite erratic in that most unexpectedly they would crest causing the jivan to repeatedly drown in the waters of the ocean. The only hope for relief here is the feet of Lord VishNu, who serves as the raft to cross over this samsAric ocean. In the context of the DayA Satakam verse, the Lord is not mentioned directly as the raft. Instead, the Lord through the medium of DayA Devi functions as the raft. Now that the ocean characteristics have been understood, the next task is that of crossing the ocean. DayA Devi has been described as the raft. However, merely because a raft is available is it possible to get a seat on the raft? Here SvAmi DeSikan answers this through the salutation “gati vidbhiH diSi diSi deSikaiH nIyamAnA” namely only one that is skilled in avoiding the pitfalls of the samsAric ocean can steer the boat clear of the turbulent waters. These boatmen that steer the raft are the AcAryAs. They are endowed with knowledge of arthapancakam (essential nature of the jIvAtmA, essential nature of ParamAtmA, the means to attain him, the fruit of such attainment, and obstacles to obtaining the fruit), have a compassionate disposition, and are parama bhagavatas. They enable the jivans gain a seat in the raft known as DayA Devi. Not only that, they also steer the raft safely. This is in the manner of Bhagiratha showing the way to Ganga, who follows him. In a like manner, the raft of DayA Devi is completely under the control of AcAryAs, who steer the raft to the destination. The inner meaning of this tribute is that one can gain the grace of Lord Srinivasa only through AcArya kaTAksham. Here is where the state of imminent defeat of DayA Devi needs to be understood. She is helpless in that wherever She turns, She only beholds suffering jIvans struggling haplessly to cross over the Samsaric ocean. Therefore, She is at a loss as to whom to rescue. First, although DayA Devi functions as a raft the question of who to admit on the raft arises. Next, comes the issue of steering the raft safely to the destination of the Venkatam hill. Both these are rendered *fait accompli* through the upakAram



"I seek refuge at the feet of SvAmi DeSikan"

SvAmi DeSikan in SrI TiruvenkatamuDaiyAn tirukkOlam

SrI Ahobila maTham, Tiruvallikeni

of AcAryAs, who first grace the jivans so that they become fit to board the raft. Next, they also help DayA Devi navigate the turbulent waters and steer the raft safely to the destination. This is the mahopakAram rendered by AcAryAs. In the nyAasatilakam, SvAmi DeSikan glorifies AcAryAs as boatmen. The tribute is contained in the verse –

"andho'nandha grahaNa vaSago yAti rangeSa yadvat

pangurnaukA kuhara nihito nIyate nAvikena |

bhunkte bhogAnavidita nrpaH sevakasyArbhakAdiH

tvatsamprAptau prabhavati tathA deSiko me dayALuH ||"

SvAmi DeSikan says that he is extremely grateful for the compassion of AcAryAs. In order to attain Lord Narayana, one must possess the required knowledge and strength. The knowledge is described in the salutation "andho'nandha grahaNa vaSago" namely the AcAryAs guide ignorant jivans in the manner of one endowed with keen eyesight holding the hands of a blind man and enabling him to go to his destination. The inner meaning is that jivans ignorant in the knowledge of Bhagavad vishayam are guided by AcAryAs in a step-by-step manner to gain this knowledge. Some may have knowledge but not the strength to attain Lord Narayana. In this case, how do the AcAryAs help? They ensure that these individuals board the raft of DayA Devi and steer this raft to the destination. SvAmi DeSikan offers another perspective in this salutation through an example. There is a king, who has a close servitor. The servitor's son has never seen the king. The servitor prepares delicacies for the king, who may partake of a few of them. However, the leftovers from the offering to the king are given to the servitor's child. This child enjoys these delicacies meant for the king. In a like manner, one does not need to have knowledge or strength. However, if one seeks refuge in an AcArya, the AcArya guarantees the benefit of attaining Lord Narayana. The same line of thought prevails in the present DayA Satakam verse in that it is not sufficient to merely have the Lord's grace. The grace of an AcArya is just as important to attain Lord Narayana. Wherever there is the grace of AcAryAs, the grace of the Lord is bound to follow. So far it has been established that DayA Devi is the raft and AcAryAs serve as boatmen to steer the raft. The AcAryAs help jIvans bereft of knowledge and strength to gain entry into the raft and safely steer the raft to the destination. The next question that arises is that the raft must be strong enough to overcome the strong currents and the shaT Urmi described previously. This is answered in the salutation "sthirataram anukampe styAna lagnA guNaistvam" namely that the raft is firmly anchored due to the fact that all the KalyaNa guNams

of the Lord with each of them supported by DayA Devi, ensure that the raft is unaffected by the turbulent waters and the shaT Urmi. It is not sufficient to merely be firm against the turbulent samsAric waters. The raft also needs to move amidst these waters. How does this come about? This is also facilitated by the support of the guNams of the Lord with DayA Devi being present along with each guNam. This enables the raft known as DayA Devi to safely reach the destination. The focus then turns to the destination. The salutation "parigata vrshaSailam pAram AropayantI" in this verse addresses this aspect. The vedam salutes the destination as "pAramApnoti tadvishNoH paramam padam". This denotes the eternal abode of Lord VishNu, namely SrI VaikuNTham. In the context of this verse, it denotes the Venkatam hill or VrshaSaila. This is the destination which needs to be reached. While traversing the ocean it is common to encounter the sight of a mountain. In this instance, the ocean is that of samsAram and the mountain is the Venkatam hill. When one reaches this destination, it denotes successfully overcoming the six Urmis that were described earlier in this verse. Here, it must be noted that Lord Srinivasa stands on top of the Venkatam hill as the Ocean of Mercy. The crossing of the ocean of samsAra is made possible by the Ocean of Mercy known as Lord Srinivasa. DayA Devi ensures that this becomes possible by functioning as the raft that is steered by capable boatmen, namely AcAryAs, to cross over the ocean of samsAra replete with the pangs of thirst, hunger, ignorance, sorrow, old age, and death to attain the feet of Lord Srinivasa. KulaSekara AzhvAr described Lord Vishnu as the raft to cross the samsAric ocean. However, SvAmi DeSikan describes DayA Devi as the raft in this instance. Be that as it may, the import of SvAmi DeSikan's tribute is that it is the grace of AcAryAs alone that enables jivans caught up in the samsAric ocean to gain redemption and successfully cross this ocean. SvAmi Kumara VaradacAriar's tribute in the VedAntadesika prapatti through the verse –

"viSvambarAm atitarAmapi bhAvayantau

vinyAsato vividha-sajjanatAnubhAvyau |

vistArasamsrti mahArNava karNadharau

vedAntasUricaranau SaraNam prapadye ||" --

reflects this fact. The import of this tribute is that "I seek refuge at the feet of SvAmi DeSikan" It may be asked what is the glory of the feet of SvAmi DeSikan? SvAmi Kumara VaradacAariar answers this as "In terms of forbearance, these feet exceed Bhumidevi, who is the epitome of this trait." The implication of this tribute is that even AcAryAs may wonder how to redeem the worst of sinners and enable them to gain Lord Narayana's grace. However, SvAmi DeSikan displays rare patience even



SrI DayA Devi is the dependable navigation vessel to cross the vast and deep ocean of samsAra

with the greatest of sinners and finds a way for them to attain Lord Narayana. Not stopping here, SvAmi Kumara Varadachariar continues “It is these feet on account of surrendering to which good people gain bliss. The ocean of samsAra which cannot be easily crossed, resulting in a seemingly interminable cycle of births and deaths is described by the statement "punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam". These feet function as the raft to cross over this vast ocean of samsAra.” The key message is that for one lacking in knowledge or strength, crossing the samsAric ocean becomes a formidable task. However, this is readily accomplished by seeking refuge at the feet of the AcAryan. In this instance the eulogy is reserved for the sacred feet of SvAmi DeSikan. Contemplating of the feet of SvAmi DeSikan with gratitude for this mahopakAram, we are blessed to enjoy the glory of DayA Devi and Lord Srinivasa through the DayA Satakam verses.”

We then quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmin: “Usually, it would be a helpful form of assertion to state that “to cross the ocean of samsAra the Lord is the only reliable boat or steamer or ship as per the MukundamAla verse 12 salutation (bhavajaladhigatAnAm dvandva).” It is a refinement to assert that “Bhakti is the boat that takes one to the shore.” A contrast is to assert that Prapatti is rather the bridge, dam, and the like to cross the large reservoir of water. This verse as a contrast, asserts that DayA Devi is the dependable navigation vessel to cross the vast and deep ocean of samsAra. Oh DayA Devi! You are the fit raft, well-built, and strongly bound by the Lord’s innumerable qualities (they serve as the string and ropes) with which a suffering human can cross over to the other shore, namely the Hill of Srinivasa. The vessel is steered by competent masters - AcAryAs. They know the direction. We cannot attain the goal of SrI VaikuNTham or its earthly equivalent, Seshadri without the help of the DayA ship.”



Slokam 39

परिमित फल सङ्गात् प्राणिनः किंपचानाः

निगम विपणि मध्ये नित्य मुक्तानुषक्तम्।

प्रसदनमनुकम्पे प्राप्तवत्या भवत्या

वृषगिरि हरिनीलं व्यञ्जितं निर्विशन्ति॥

parimita phala sangAt prANinaH kimpacAnAH

nigama vipaNi madhye nitya muktAnushaktam|

prasadanam anukampe prAptavatyA bhavatyA

vrshagiri harinIlam vyanjitam nirviSanti||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin: "The previous Slokam described DayA Devi as the raft, which is steered by AcAryAs, that rescues jivans struggling to cross the ocean of samsAram. Some that are immersed in the samsAric ocean may realize that they are incapable of crossing this ocean on their own and seek out the means - DayA Devi and AcAryAs. However, some others take pride in the fact that they are steeped in this ocean and are being tossed hither and thither. These jivans regard the samsAric ocean as the ultimate enjoyment (bhogyam). For example, there is a drain that is infested by bugs. These bugs do not seek a way to get out of the drain. Instead, they revel at the residence in the drain amidst the dirt. The state of jivans who regard the samsSric ocean as the ultimate enjoyment is similar to that of the bugs residing in the drain. This verse discusses the anugraham of DayA Devi for such jivans so that they seek a means for upliftment and are redeemed from the ocean of samsaram. The entire above verse describs this act of DayA Devi. Not everyone that offers salutations to Lord Srinivasa seeks the benefit of moksham. Some may offer prayers with the view to getting their progeny married, while some others may ask for relief from illness, some others who may be advanced in age may offer eulogy with the specific aim of living for some more years (say 15 or so), some submit prayers with the goal of resolution of family problems, and some seek success in exams, promotion in professional career and the like. Very few submit prayers with the singular objective of

Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa in this leela vibhUti as well as nitya vibhUti. This comes about due to an inherent trait in various jivans that tends to regard their present state as being permanent and thus seeking ways and means to enhance their lot. However, they do not realize that the present state is transient, replete with difficulties and that there exists a better state of being, namely serving Lord Narayana in His Eternal Abode - SrI VaikuNTham. This is not only true of jivans inhabiting the earth. It is also true of the devAs that inhabit Svarga lokam (heaven). In one instance, Indra, the king of the DevAs incurred apacAram towards a Maharishi (sage), who cursed him to have residence in the earth in isolation. The DevAs were perturbed that losing Indra would bring about considerable trouble in that they would be leaderless. Absent this fact, rains would not arrive in a timely manner, this would in turn lead to a host of problems. Therefore, they submitted an appeal to the Maharishi asking if there is a way out from this curse and if it could be modified. It is important to note the difference between sins (pApam) and curses (Sapam). The former can be nullified by resorting to expiatory rites, while the latter has to be endured until the prescribed time span. In this instance, Indra, who had incurred the curse from the Maharishi, had no way out but to endure the consequences of the curse. The Maharishi hearing the appeal of the other DevAs relented and said "Since you have submitted an appeal to me, I shall help you. This Indra will be born on earth as a pig. I shall help you by identifying the pig. If you kill the pig, Indra will return to his abode in Svarga." Accordingly, Indra was born on earth as a pig. After a while, the Maharishi identified the pig for the DevAs, who set out to kill the pig. However, upon beholding this, the pig pleaded to be left alive. The DevAs informed the pig that he was Indra and that Svarga lokam awaited him upon his death to relieve him from this lowly state of a pig surrounded by dirt. Therefore, they were anxious to get Indra back to his original state. However, the pig mentioned, "Be that as it may. For now, I am happy being a pig and revel in the dirt. Let time go by and at the end of this state we can consider the return to Svarga lokam." In a like manner, jivans wallowing in samsaram enjoy that state despite knowing that a better, and lasting state awaits them and are reluctant to adopt the means to attain the elevated state. This is their inherent nature. However, this does not deter DayA Devi from conferring Her grace on them and ensuring that they beget moksham as a consequence of which they attain the elevated state of eternal kaimkaryam for the divya dampatis (Lord Narayana and Sri Devi).

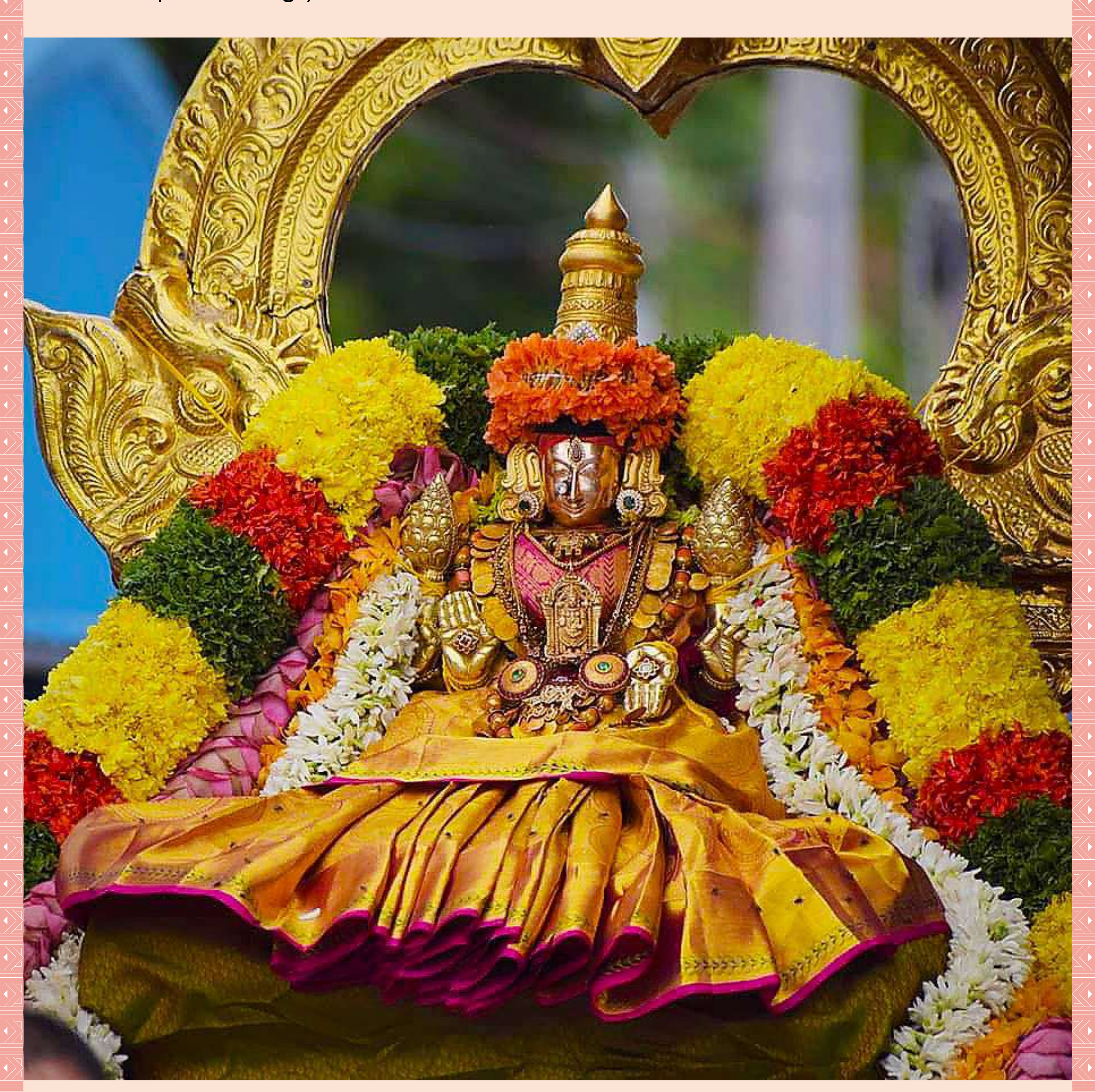
The first part of this verse "parimita phala sangAt prANinaH kimpacAnA nigama vipaNi madhye nitya muktAnushaktam" describes the Vedam as a giant store from which there is no item that cannot be obtained. This is akin to a multi-

storied mall from which anything that one desires can be acquired. The import of this tribute is that there is nothing unsaid in the Vedam. It is complete in that it documents everything that needs to be known in encyclopedic fashion. For example, the Vedam declares that for those desirous of gaining great wealth they perform a yaj~na for Vaayu. On the other hand, if one desires a long life, the Vedam recommends another yaj~nam. For begetting progeny, the Vedam prescribes the performance of putra kAmeshTi yaj~nam. For those seeking relief from illness, the Vedam recommends another yaj~nam. SvAmi DeSikan declares in this verse that in such a store from which one is able to get everything, people with poor intellect choose to get trivial benefits as reflected by the salutation "prANinaH kimpacAnA". For example, if one who is offered the freedom to pick whatever they need from a store that offers everything in abundance (clothes, food, cosmetics, household goods, decorations, fixtures, and the like) picks a hair clip, it is a wasted effort (getting something trivial when great bounty is available). Another instance illustrating this fact comes from the upanyasam of an ancient scholar, who narrated the episode of the twelve Garuda Sevais at TirunAngur divya desam. There was a poor Brahmin couple, that lived near the divya desam. On the day of the Garuda Sevai, eleven Perumals passed by their house and received upacArams from others. By the time the last Perumal arrived, they were ready and offered fruit, flowers, and other upacArams. In Tirukudandai too, a similar Garuda Sevai takes place where SarngapANi Perumal and CakrapANi Perumal arrive first, followed by other Perumals. Usually, the Perumals that arrive first receive all upacArams, while the later arriving Perumals may not receive as much. Therefore, the last Perumal at the Tirunangur Sevai was very pleased with the offerings and through the arcakar informed them that Perumal was extremely pleased with their samarpaNam. He was ready to grant anything that they wished for. The man of the house was not skilled in worldly ways and therefore informed the arcakar that he would check with his wife and then make the request. Upon enquiring from his wife, she said that she had an ancient vessel for boiling milk each day. After boiling the milk, the residue sticking to the bottom of the vessel needed to be cleaned carefully (if not the milk boiled the next day would spoil) by scraping the remnants of the solidified milk residue. This vessel was becoming difficult to scrape and was giving way. Therefore, it would be great if he could request Perumal for a replacement milk vessel and scraper. Again, when the Lord was willing to confer bountiful riches, the poor man asked for a mere milk vessel and scraper (something trivial). This mirrors the state of most of us, who seek trivial things, when the Lord is prepared to offer vast riches. These trivial objects cause a longing as if they are the ultimate things to

attain. The Vedam declares “apavasoma amrutA abhUma” the import of which is: performance of SomayAgam confers that benefit, which is lasting. The only benefit that is of a permanent nature is that of moksham. However, performance of soma yAgam does not confer moksham. The only known mechanism to obtain moksham are Bhakti Yogam and Prapatti. Then how could the Vedam declare the performance of Soma yAgam to confer this benefit? Here it must be understood that the Vedam is offering a benefit relative to other trivial things and the reference is not for moksham. How so? Compared to one that is short lived (a few years), one who lives until age 80 is considered long lived (dIrghAyu). In a like manner, compared to the earthly benefits, the joy of Svarga lokam is much greater. It is in this comparative context that the Vedam tribute needs to be understood. However, even the benefit of Svarga lokam is transient in nature. The only thing that is permanent is Kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple in SrI VaikuNTham as a consequence of moksham. With reference to the DayA Satakam verse, SvAmi DeSikan states that through a comparative analysis of everything that is offered by the Vedam one needs to determine what is the benefit that is permanent. Armed with this knowledge, one must submit the prayer to Lord Srinivasa to ask for the ultimate benefit of moksham. Just like the Vedam is a grand store from which everything can be obtained, Lord Srinivasa too is a great store from which all fruits can be obtained. However, instead of requesting Bhagavad Kaimkaryam (eternal service to the Lord) most people submit their prayer to Lord Srinivasa for evanescent earthly gains. Sri. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin mentioned a personal experience from his working days. About 25 years ago, a payment of arrears was made. At that time each worker used it in a different way. One of them purchased a color TV with the money, while another purchased a flat in a multi-storied building. The former commiserated with the latter, that his purchase was unwise since the TV lasted only a few years and was worthless after the fact. However, the latter’s investment appreciated considerably and was worth a lot more than the initial investment. Such discussions are not restricted to mundane matters but also apply to VedAntic pursuits. Specifically, one needs to undertake a careful analysis of the fruits offered by the Vedam and arrive at the conclusion of what is the ultimate bounty. After this determination, one needs to appeal to Lord Srinivasa to grant this boon.

When DayA Devi beholds people asking for trivial boons from Lord Srinivasa, She is greatly concerned for their well-being and wonders - “these beings are seeking worthless boons from the Lord, who is prepared to grant them everything. How can I help them?” DayA Devi’s upakAram (help) to such beings is described in

the tribute "nigama vipaNi madhye nitya muktAnushaktam prasadanam anukampe prAptavatyA bhavatyA" (Oh DayA Devi! prasadanaM prAptavatyA - in Your desire to help such beings).



SrI DayA Devi urges people to offer prayers to SrI Srinivasa for the boon of Kaimkaryam to Him.

What is it that DayA Devi does? This is seen from the eulogy “nigama vipaNi madhye nitya muktAnushaktam” namely that DayA Devi skillfully hides from the view of such beings all the trivial and impermanent benefits documented in the Vedam and instead reveals to them only the elevated boons offered therein. For example, when one goes to a store, one may find original items and duplicate items (of inferior quality). However, there are some stores that only carry original items and highlight the fact that duplicates are not available. In a like manner, DayA Devi ensures that those who arrive at the shrine of Lord Srinivasa are made aware of the fact that this grand store carries only original items (offers eternal fruits) and no duplicates (impermanent and trivial fruits are not available). The inner meaning of this tribute is that DayA Devi instructs beings pursuing trivial benefits to behold Lord Srinivasa, who is worshipped eternally by nitya sUris (those who always reside in SrI VaikuNThm) and muktAs (those who are liberated), as the only worthwhile object of pursuit and therefore, urges them to offer prayers to Him for the boon of Kaimkaryam to Him. Specifically, She encourages them to request the boon of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam in this lokam as well as in SrI VaikuNTham for Lord Srinivasa. It is quite common to have a list of things that one may want to ask of Lord Srinivasa while going to His shrine. However, the effulgence of the Lord is so overpowering that it makes one forget the list. At this juncture, DayA Devi submits the appeal to Lord Srinivasa that He should grace them so that they gain moksham.

In the HamsasandeSam (instruction from Lord Rama, who sends out a bird in search of Sita), SvAmi DeSikan states “Behold the Tiruvenkatam hill! Salute this from a distance. After prostrating before the Lord, engage in Kaimkaryam that you can render for the Lord.” The salutation is:

“tatrAruDhaiH mahati manujaIH svargibhiScAvatIrNaiH

sattvonmeshAt vyapagatamithaH tAratamyAdi bhedaIH |

sAdhAraNyAt phalapariNateH sanghaSo badhyamAnam

SaktyAkAmam madhuvijayinaH tvam ca kuryAH saparyAm ||”

Here the glory of Lord Srinivasa is highlighted through the fact that common people climb up the Venkatam hill to offer their salutations to Lord Srinivasa, while the muktAs and nityAs that inhabit SrI VaikuNThm descend from their abode to offer their salutations. During the Brahmotsavam for Lord Srinivasa at Tirumalai, after the Lord finishes the Veedhi PurappADu (procession in the street), He arrives at the bank of SvAmi PushkaraNi to receive the mangaLASAsanam from the thirty-three crore devatAs. Upon receiving the mangaLASAsanam, the Lord is facing the

SvAmi PushkaraNi and an offering of a vessel full of water to the PushkaraNi by way of Perumal tIrtham for the devatAs is made. This is described through the salutation "svargibhiH ca avatIrNaiH".



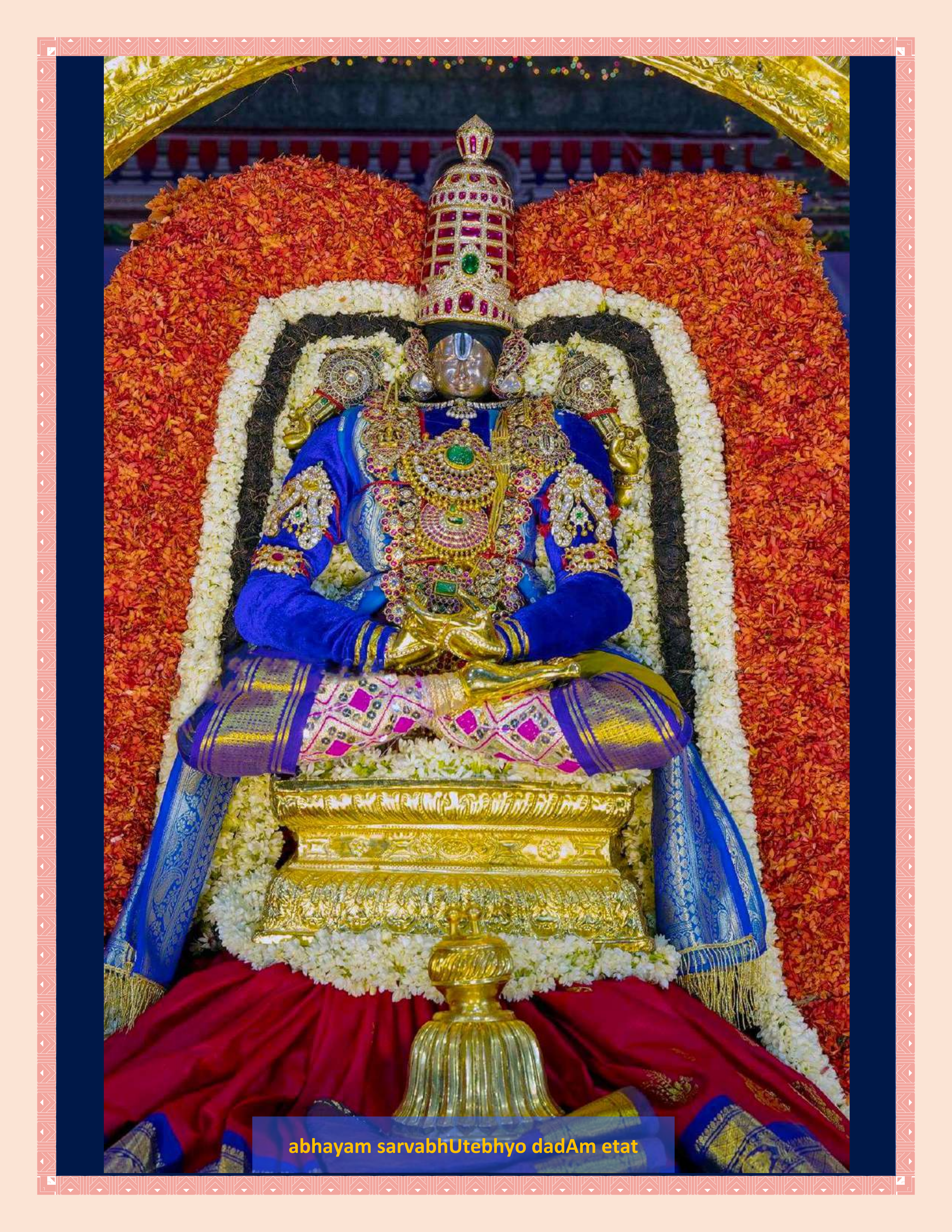
The effulgent Lord!

Upon saluting Lord Srinivasa one gets an increase of satva guNam. This in turn rids one of comparisons with others leading to proclamation of superiority and

denigration of others. This is alluded to in the salutation tAratamyam, namely the declaration of one's superiority over another on the basis of wealth, learning and the like. Lord Srinivasa's graces all without discrimination of any kind on the basis of caste, creed, affiliation, learning, wealth, or gender. Such anugraham is possible at the Venkatam hill. This is facilitated by DayA Devi. A poor man is graced by Lord Srinivasa by granting him his wishes and by providing him a darSanam of His Lotus Feet in the same manner as a rich man without discrimination of any kind. DayA Devi's anugraham to them in this context needs to be observed. She ensures that these beings realize that their sole refuge for redemption are the Lotus Feet of the Lord and make them perform upAyam (SaraNAgati) at the appropriate time to gain moksham. The salutation of the DayA Satakam verse "nitya muktAnushaktam vrshagiri harinIlam vyanjitam nirviSanti" denotes the fact that the grand store known as Srinivasa carries only original items of value and has absolutely no room for duplicates. This Srinivasa is like the Indra neela blue stone bedecked with gems. This Hari neelam is revealed by DayA Devi to all. This anubhavam is also found in the Tiruvaimozhi. Specifically, SvAmi NammAzhvAr in the "ulakam uNDa" pAsurams offers his tribute as

"vaNNa maruL koL aNi mega vaNNA! mAya ammAnE!
eNNam pukuntu tittikkum amutE imaiyOr atipatiyE
teNNal aruvi maNipon muttalaikkum tiruvEnkatattAnE aNNalE!
un aDi cEra aDiyERkAva ennAyE".

The Azhvar also describes Lord Srinivasa as "nilavum cuDar cUzh oLi mUrti". This effulgent Srinivasa is revealed to beings who come to His shrine by DayA Devi. In this manner, DayA Devi graces even those who come to offer their prayers for Lord Srinivasa with the view to gaining trivial material benefits. The inner meaning of this verse is that DayA Devi instructs these beings in the fact that when the elevated boon - bliss of eternal Kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple in SrI VaikuNThm can be had in leela vibhUti at the shrine of Srinivasa, why pray for trivial boons? Instead seek this, which will also guarantee you moksham at the end of earthly existence. In Srimad RahasyatrayasAram, SvAmi DeSikan refers to the destruction of one's sins upon receiving the grace of DayA Devi as "gankaiyil kuLittavarukku pApam pokumApOlE". This describes one who seeks the cool waters of the Ganga river as a mechanism to escape the summer heat. He has no awareness of the potency of the Ganga waters to destroy one's sins. However, by merely taking a dip in the Ganga water, he is rid of his sins and gains great puNyam. In a like manner,


abhayam sarvabhUtebhyo dadAm etat

one who salutes Lord Srinivasa seeking a trifle, gets graced with elevated nitya aiSvaryam, namely the lasting benefit of eternal kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple in SrI VaikuNTham. This comes about entirely on account of DayA Devi's affection for such people.

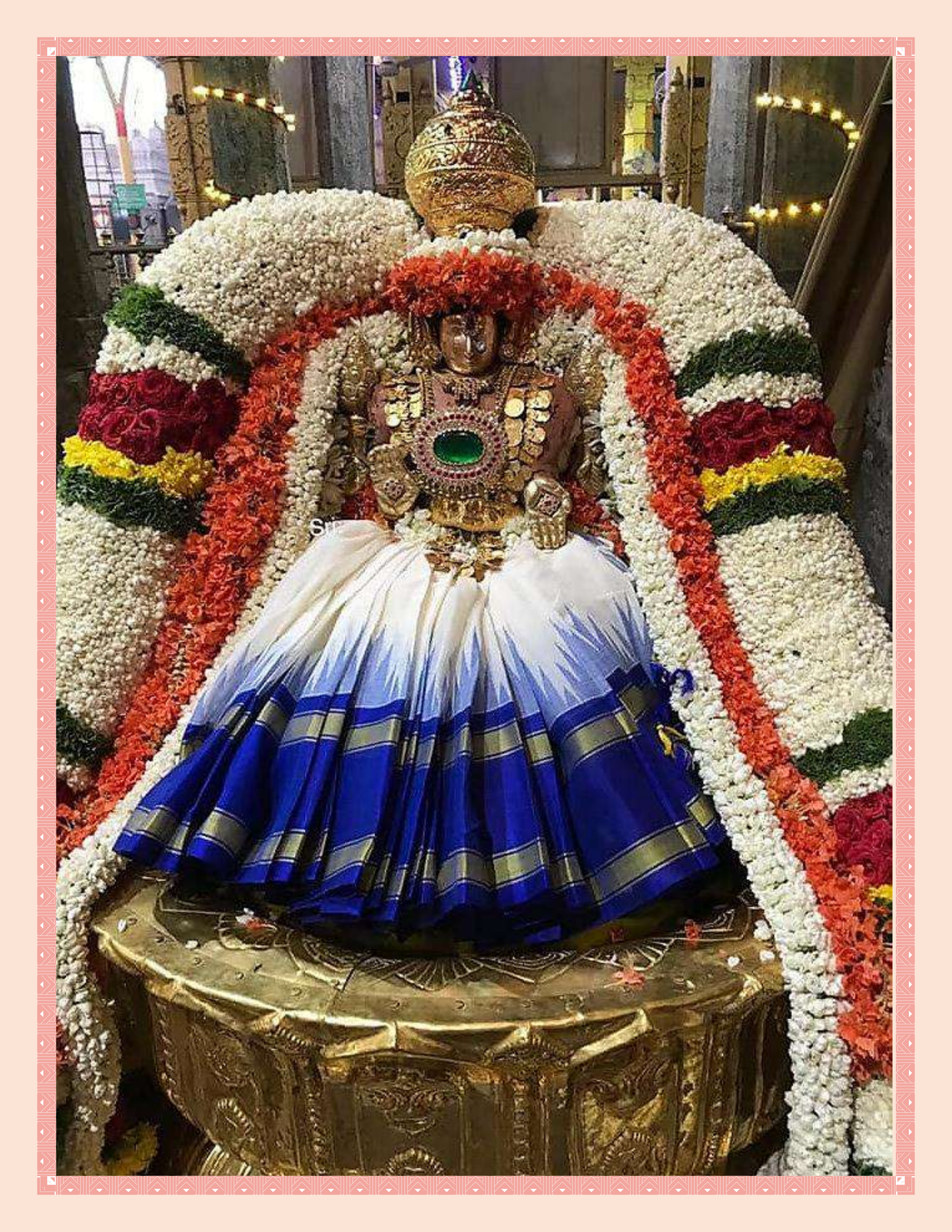
The tribute "vrshagiri harinIlaM vyanjitam nirviSanti" also alludes to the fact that the Lord cares about upholding the words of His BhaktAs even if it results in bringing Him disrepute. For example, in the MahabhArata war, Arjuna after a nearly ten day battle found it difficult to kill Bheeshma. Although prodded by Lord Krishna to aim his arrows in a specific manner, Arjuna was ineffective. Realizing this, Lord Krishna, who had promised to not bear any arms in the war, took up His sudarSana Cakram and advanced towards Bheeshma, while chastising Arjuna. Beholding this sight, Bheeshma was full of joy. He threw down all his weapons and with folded hands submitted his prayer that he would like to be relieved of his earthly sojourn at the hands of Lord Krishna and attain moksham. However, Arjuna pleaded with the Lord not to kill Bheeshma, since it would bring the Lord as well as him disrepute due to the fact that the charioteer accomplished a task that was seemingly beyond the great warrior. The Lord relented and took His place in the chariot once again. At the same time following the killing of Abhimanyu, when Arjuna took the terrible oath that he would kill Jayadratha the following day or else enter the fire, Lord Krishna went through extraordinary effort to uphold this promise. A case in point was His masking of the Sun using the sudarSana Cakram so that Jayadratha would be caught off guard and become easy prey for Arjuna. In a like manner DayA Devi too is prepared to go to great extent and overcome all odds to rescue suffering beings caught up in materialistic pursuits and grace them with the eternal bliss of nitya kaimkaryam arising from moksham. Likewise, one can see from SrImad Ramayanam (in the VibhIshana SaraNAgati) when Lord Rama arrives on the shore of the ocean along with Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, and the rest of the Vaanara army, four asurAs arrive from LankA and utter the plea "parityaktAm maya Lanka". The appeal is that they have forsaken everything in LankA - their wives, children, relatives, wealth, and all belongings. This is documented in VibhishaNa's prayer –

"tyaktvA putrAmSca dArAmSca rAghavam SaraNam gata

sarva loka SaraNayAya rAghavAya mahAtmane nivedayata

mAm kshipram vibhIshaNam upasthitam".

He specifically asks the Vaanaras to inform Lord Rama, that VibhishaNa belonging to the adversary clan has arrived and submitted his appeal to Lord Rama. Immediately, Lord Rama responds with his charama slokam –



“sakrudeva prapannAya tavAsmi iti ca yAcate

abhayam sarvabhUtebhyo dadAm etat vratam mama"

(One who performs SaraNAgati to Me once, will be assured of freedom from all fear. This is My sworn position) and graced VibhishaNa.

Furthermore, Lord Rama ensured the coronation of VibhishaNa as the king of LankA on the ocean shore. After the killing of Ravana had been accomplished, Rama took Lakshmana aside and mentioned to him that the coronation of VibhishaNa on the sea-shore was symbolic and that with the killing of Ravana, VibhishaNa inherits LankAiSvaryam. He further instructed Lakshmana to go to Lanka and perform the coronation of VibhIshanA - krtakrtyastadA vibhishaNa in accordance with the SaastrAic prescriptions.



Kruta krutyan! - VaDuvUr SrI Rama parivAr

“abhishicya ca lankAyAm rAkshasendram vibhIshaNam | krtakrtyastadA rAmo vijvaraH pramumoda ha” is the Ramayanam salutation which documents the fact that upon the formal coronation of Vibhishana, Rama became a Kruta Krutyan - namely one who has accomplished that which needed to be accomplished. It is well known that Lord Rama endured great travails in the forest, befriended the monkey-king Sugriva, and constructed the stone-bridge across the ocean only to get back Sita after killing Ravana. However, Lord Rama had something different in mind while symbolically coronating Vibhishana on the sea-shore. His intent was to ensure that Vibhishana was seated on the throne in Lanka and formally coronated. Upon fulfilling this task, Lord Rama was delighted and declared Himself to be a kruta krutyan, namely the sole purpose of His undertaking the enormous effort culiminating in the killing of Ravana was for protecting Vibhishana, who had performed SaraNAgati. DayA Devi in a manner similar to Lord Rama, takes delight in redeeming jivans, who approach Lord Srinivasa with prayers for trivial material benefits. Instead, She bestows upon them the elevated boon of moksham resulting in nitya kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana and tAyAr in Their Eternal Abode, SrI VaikuNTham.”

We then quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patrachariar SvAmin:

“This is an allegorical reference to the Supreme Service rendered by DayA Devi to all sentient beings. She “sells” a supreme object, Sri VenkateSa, to people in search of mean objects of daily consumption and infinitesimal pleasure. Thereby these beings are enabled to enjoy infinite bliss. This is the central message of all Vedas too. However, people seek and are satisfied with lesser goods.

Oh DayA Devi! People visit the great market of the Vedas. They purchase all sorts of material there. All these are trivial, of short-term value, and of ephemeral interest. There, at one spot, You sell precious goods - gems and valuable stones of priceless significance. Among pearls You sell blue-stone too. That represents Lord Srinivasa. You are an expert marketeer, I think. Incidentally, You do a great good. The purchaser becomes an upasaka of the Lord, who will progress to Moksham in regular steps. He thus becomes a liberated soul, enjoying bliss with the Paramatma. What a great favor of the highest order You confer!

The deeper import of this verse is that students of the Vedas ought to become competent to realize the essential thrust of the Vedas and adopt Prapatti at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. In order for the Vedic scholar to spurn all contrary interpretations and become eligible for Lord Srinivasa’s grace, DayA Devi’s benevolence is critical.”

Slokam 40

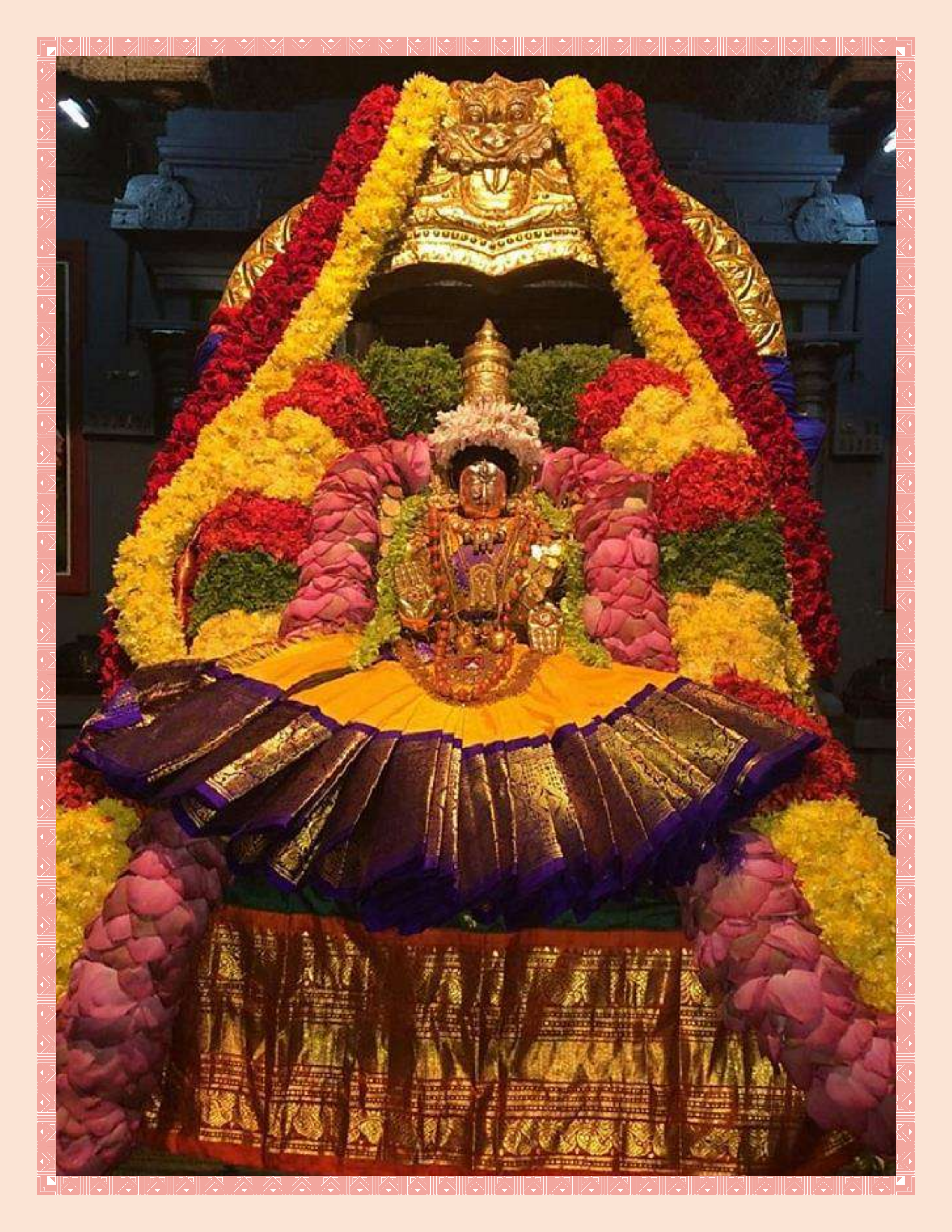
त्वयि बहुमति हीनः श्रीनिवासानुकम्पे
जगति गतिमिहान्यां देवि संमन्यते यः।
स खलु विबुध सिन्धौ सन्निकर्षे वहन्त्यां
शमयति मृगतृष्णा वीचिकाभिः पिपासाम्॥

tvayi bahumati hInaH SrInivAsAnukampe
jagati gatimihAnyAm devi sammanyate yaH|
sa khalu vibudha sindhau sannikarshe vahantyAm
Samayati mrgatrishNA vIcikAbhiH pipAsAm||



We first quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Valayapettai Ramachar SvAmin:

The above 40th Slokam is the final slokam in this set of ten verses. SvAmi DeSikan embeds the summary of the entire decad in this Slokam. There are two ways of stating a fact. One is in a positive manner. The other is in a negative manner. (anvayamukhena and viparItamukhena respectively). The former consists of instructions such as "Never utter falsehood. Always speak the truth", "Perform snAnam at the appropriate time", "Engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam", "The senses have been provided to engage in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. Do not misuse these", "Do not be engaged in constant pursuit of wealth". Such instructions typically go unheeded. However, vyatirekam, namely the consequences for not adhering to these instructions is a more powerful mechanism for ensuring compliance. For example, "sandhya upAsita" is the instruction that exhorts one to perform trikala sandhyAvandanam and worship BhagavAn regularly. This is seldom heeded. However, the detrimental impact of not performing sandhyAvandanam by way of "one who is bereft of sandhyAvandanam is bound to incur the wrath of BhagavAn. Such a person is constantly in the state of aSuci - always impure." This would definitely motivate one to undertake the performance of this rite on the grounds that they may or may not be privy to the Lord's grace but certainly do not want to incur His displeasure resulting in punishment." Yet another instance of such instruction can be seen from the statements - "If these items are regularly eaten, they are good for health. On the other hand, partaking of some others is bad for



health.” The latter part of the instruction carries greater appeal - namely avoiding negative consequences. In the previous verses, SvAmi DeSikan highlighted the glory of DayA Devi through salutations requesting residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill, requesting Her help to enable discernment of the right path from the incorrect path, rescuing sinners from grave punishment, rescuing people who have taken residence at the Venkatam hill on some pretext other than Bhagavad Kaimkaryam and serving as the raft steered by capable boatmen known as AcAryas to enable suffering jivans to cross the samsAric ocean. In this verse, SvAmi DeSikan declares, that instead of seeking out DayA Devi, who renders these mahopakArams (great help), if one turns to others they are sure to get nothing at all. This needs to be known. SvAmi DeSikan further states that only prayers submitted at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa through the medium of DayA Devi will yield bountiful fruits which are elevated and permanent. shrInivAsAnukampe - Oh anukampa of Srinivasa is the sambodhanam (call out)! You are the sole refuge for the entire Universe. MahAlakshmI tAyAr, the consort of the Lord is the Empress of the entire Universe according to the Vedam salutation “ISvarIgum sarvabhUtAnam tAmihopahvaye Sriyam.” SvAmi DeSikan eulogizes DayA Devi occupying the position of tAyAr (verse 6 established the equivalence of DayA Devi to tAyAr). Due to this equivalence (abhedam), DayA Devi is the Empress of the Universe. The Lord is saluted as “kalau venkaTanAyakaH” namely, in Kaliyugam, the Lord that is to be worshipped is Srinivasa. This Srinivasa, along with DayA Devi, who has taken residence on top of the Venkatam hill on the banks of the SvAmi PushkaraNi forsaking His eternal abode, SrI VaikuNThm, needs to be saluted. This must be undertaken uttering the prayer "Govinda Govinda" in keeping with the statement “raksham raksham pratIkshate.” Instead of seeking DayA Devi, if one resorts to others as described in the salutation “tvayi bahumati hInaH SrInivAsAnukampe” the result is “anyAmgatim sammanyate” For example, a learned scholar expositing on the Sastras is quite often ignored in favor of someone else that is less qualified and engages in mis-interpreting the sastras. The instruction here is for ‘bahumati hInaH” (those of weak intellect) to not ignore DayA Devi who grants the ultimate bountiful treasure and instead resort to others, who may grant trivial benefits. Specifically, when Lord Srinivasa is ready to grant everything and more than what one needs, one should not engage in pursuit of DevatAntaras in keeping with the declaration that for Brahma, Siva, and Indra the Moola Purusha (root cause) is Lord Narayana (Srinivasa), who bears the lotus in His navel. This is also seen from the Tirumazhicai AzhvAr tribute “nAnmukanai nArAyaNan paDaittAn nanmukanaittAnmukamai cankaranai paDaittAn” whose import is that Lord

Narayana created Brahma, who in turn created Siva. Thus, Siva is the third generation in the sequence of creation. Not realizing this one engages in worship of other Devatas like watering a tree that has been uprooted and placed upside down. Elsewhere in the Divya Prabandham, the instance of Arjuna realizing that Lord Krishna was the Supreme Being is highlighted. Specifically, Arjuna was engaged in worship of Siva. However, Lord Krishna instructed him that urgent matters await and that they have to leave immediately. Therefore, Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna to submit to His feet the flowers that he had intended for use in Siva worship. Arjuna followed the instruction and the next day he beheld at the head of Siva the flowers submitted to Lord Krishna's feet. "Ican ulagaLanta cEvaDi mEl avaiyE civamuDimEl tAn kaNDu" is the AzhvAr tribute highlighting this fact. Arjuna being awed by the glory of Lord Krishna is described by the AzhvAr as "pArttan IntaDainta tantuzhAyan perumAL". When Srinivasa of such unlimited glory is readily accessible SvAmi DeSikan describes the plight of those who discard Him in favor of other deities. Specifically, can these other deities grant anything that cannot be obtained from Lord Srinivasa? SvAmi DeSikan affirms that the answer is undoubtedly no. The AzhvAr salutation "erutu koDiyuDaiyOnum piramanum indiranum maRRum oruttarum ippiravi ennum nOikku maruntu aRivarum illai" documents the fact that Brahma and Indra are unaware of the medicine that can save one from the pain of an interminable cycle of births. So much so they struggle and are at their wits end when asked even for a prescription for this ailment. Neither one who rides the bull as his vehicle (Siva) nor Brahma, or Indra can provide this prescription. Then it is asked who is aware of this prescription. The Azhvar answers this through the salutation "maruttuvanAi ninRa mAmaNi vaNNa" namely Lord Narayana. This is further elaborated upon by Periya Azhvar in his TirumaliruncOlai tribute "maRu piRavi tavira tirutti un koyil kaDai puka pei tirumAliruncOlai entAi" The Lord ensures that one is freed from birth and the Azhvar seeks the Lord's grace to engage in Kaimkaryam for the Lord of TirumAliruncOlai - a sneak preview of what awaits one in SrI VaikuNTham. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, the import is that DayA Devi is responsible for ensuring that those who come to the Shrine of Srinivasa perform sharaNAgati at His feet and beget the elevated boon of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. SvAmi DeSikan highlights the plight of those who forsake this elevated benefit offered by DayA Devi and instead seek other means as evidenced by the salutation "jagati gatimihAnyAm devi sammanyate" For example, there is one who is limping due to defective limbs. In the scorching heat of the summer, he is extremely thirsty. He is seeking ways and means to quench his thirst. Nearby is the Ganga River that offers



cool waters to quench his thirst. Instead, he beholds a mirage at a distance and thinks that he can quench his thirst through the high waves of the mirage. Is it even possible to quench one's thirst from the waves of a mirage discarding the readily available water of the Ganga River? Absolutely not.

The plight of those hankering after seemingly important benefits offered by DevatAntaras (other devatAs) is akin to that of the limping man scorched by the



summer heat seeking to quench his thirst from the waves of the mirage. Thus, when one discards Lord Srinivasa in favor of other deities, neither can they get aihikam (wordly benefits) or the benefit of moksham, which is Amushmikam. Thus, such individuals are left with absolute zero. Only when emphasized in vyatireka form (negative impact), can the importance of sole worship of Lord Srinivasa to the exclusion of all other deities be understood. Here the analogy is that DayA Devi is ready to serve the needs of all devotees verily like the Ganga River. She confers caityam and pAvanam much in the same manner as the Ganga River which not only enables one to quench one's thirst but also renders the individual pure (pariSuddham). Therefore, SvAmi DeSikan instructs us not to ignore the lofty benefit offered by DayA Devi and chase seemingly great benefits promised by other Devatas. If such an exercise is undertaken, no benefit will accrue to the individual. It must be noted that SvAmi DeSikan is no different from Lord Srinivasa due to the

tribute "venkaTeshAvatAroyam tat ghaNThAm sotavAbhavet". His compassion for all suffering jIvans is no different from that of DayA Devi. Therefore, it is not inappropriate to regard SvAmi DeSikan himself as a manifestation of DayA Devi. He systematized the doctrine of SaraNAgati and enabled the upliftment of numerous baddha jIvans caught up in the samsAric ocean. Therefore, it is important to develop bhakti for the Lotus Feet of SvAmi DeSikan, who has made available in an easy to adopt manner the doctrine of SaraNAgati."

We then quote the anubhavam of SrI. u.vE. Saili Patracharìar SvAmin:

"SvAmi DeSikan offers important advice to all interested persons in this verse. "To us, Srinivasa DayA is the only hope. Resort to it. You are sure of solving all life-problems and of reaching eternal bliss. People often resort to different devatas because of their imperfect understanding. What is the use? Whosoever bonded you to this body and to samsAra can alone help to cut off the bonds. So, declare the SaastrAs in clear terms. Not knowing the subtle points and essential nuances of spirituality, many people standing on the banks of the Ganga suddenly run to distant places to quench their thirst, and run in the direction of a mirage, scores of feet away. Could these foolish people quench their thirst from a mirage? So also, we have no hope for redemption from different devatAs and their blessings."







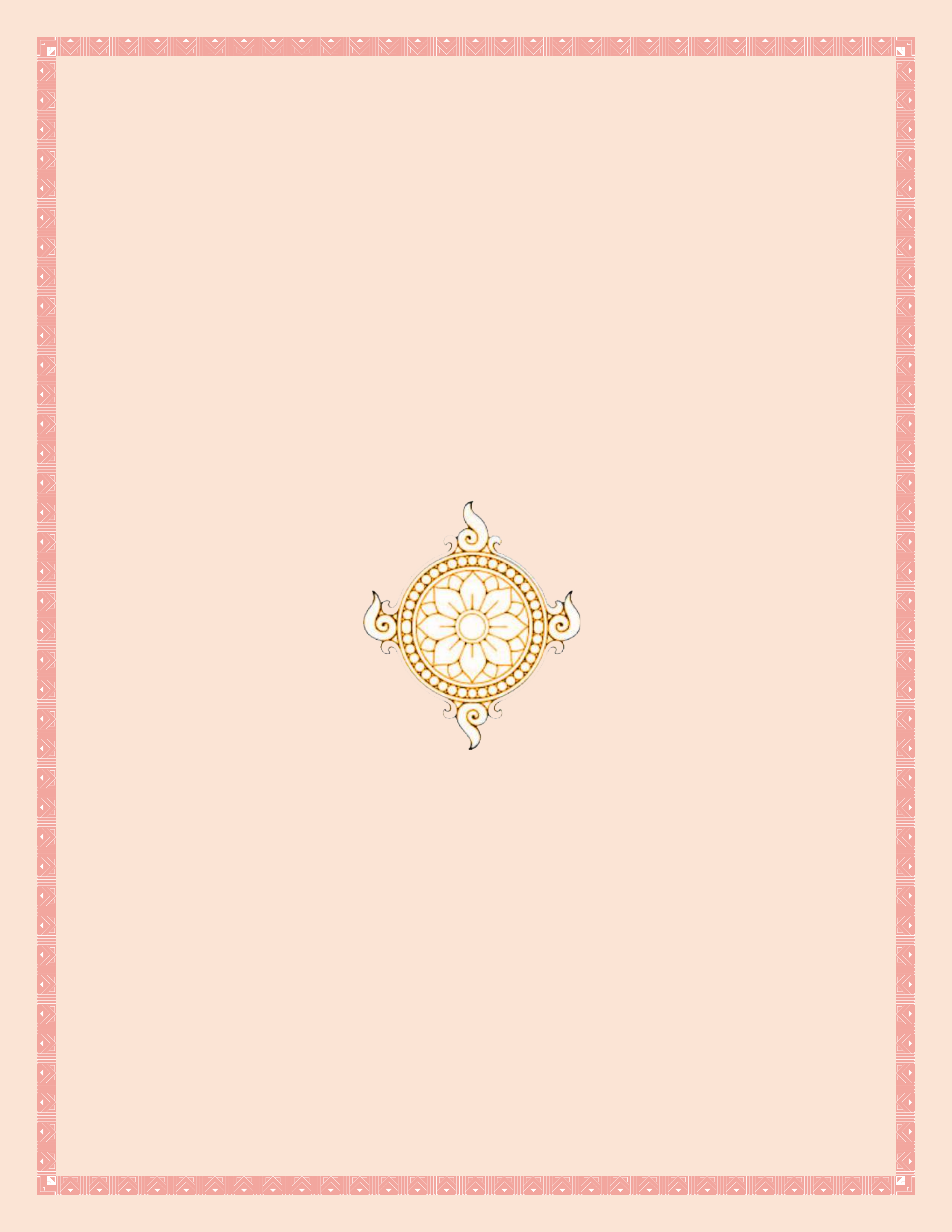
SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 41 – 50)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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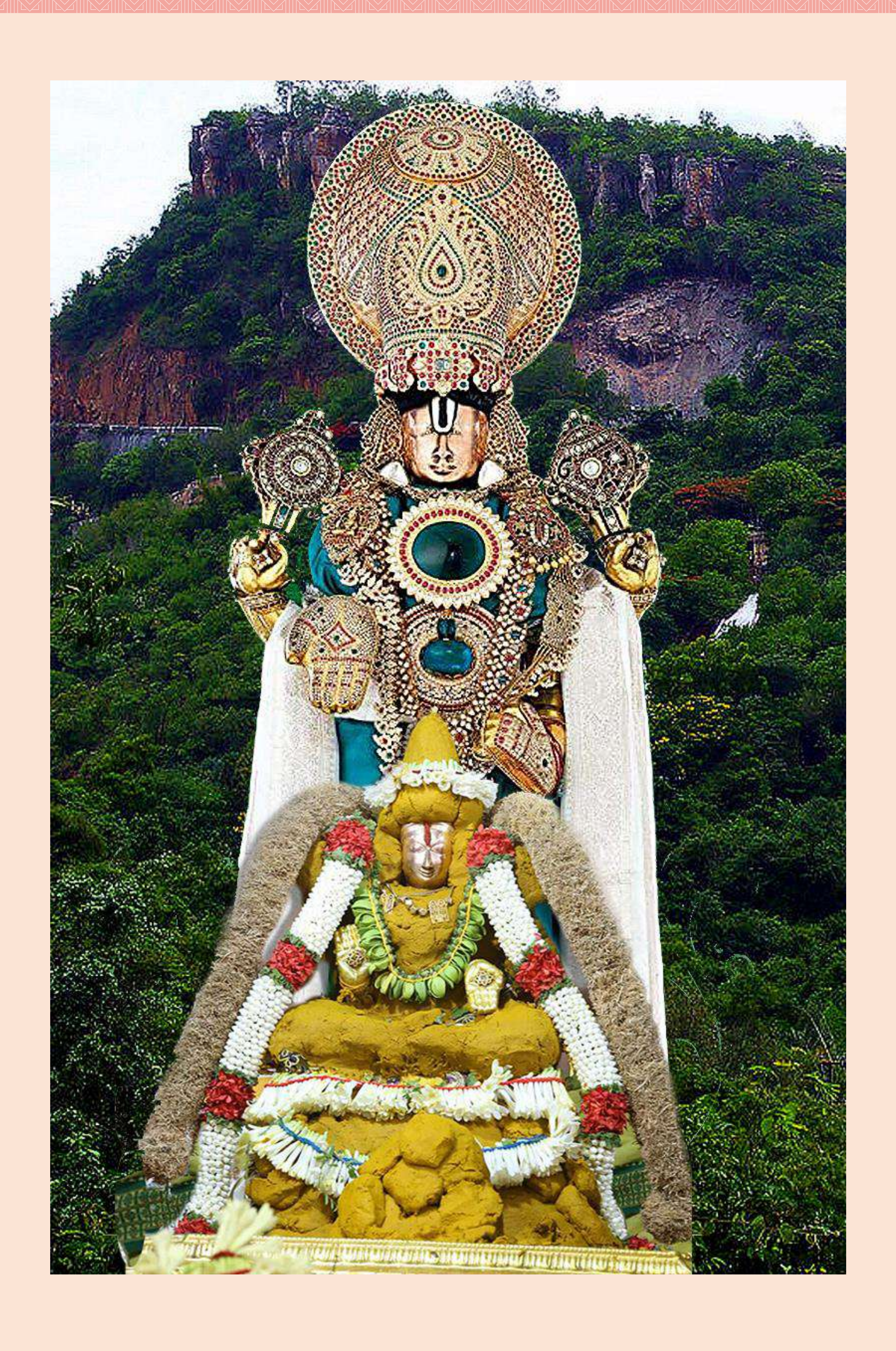
SvAmi nigamAnta mahAdeSikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



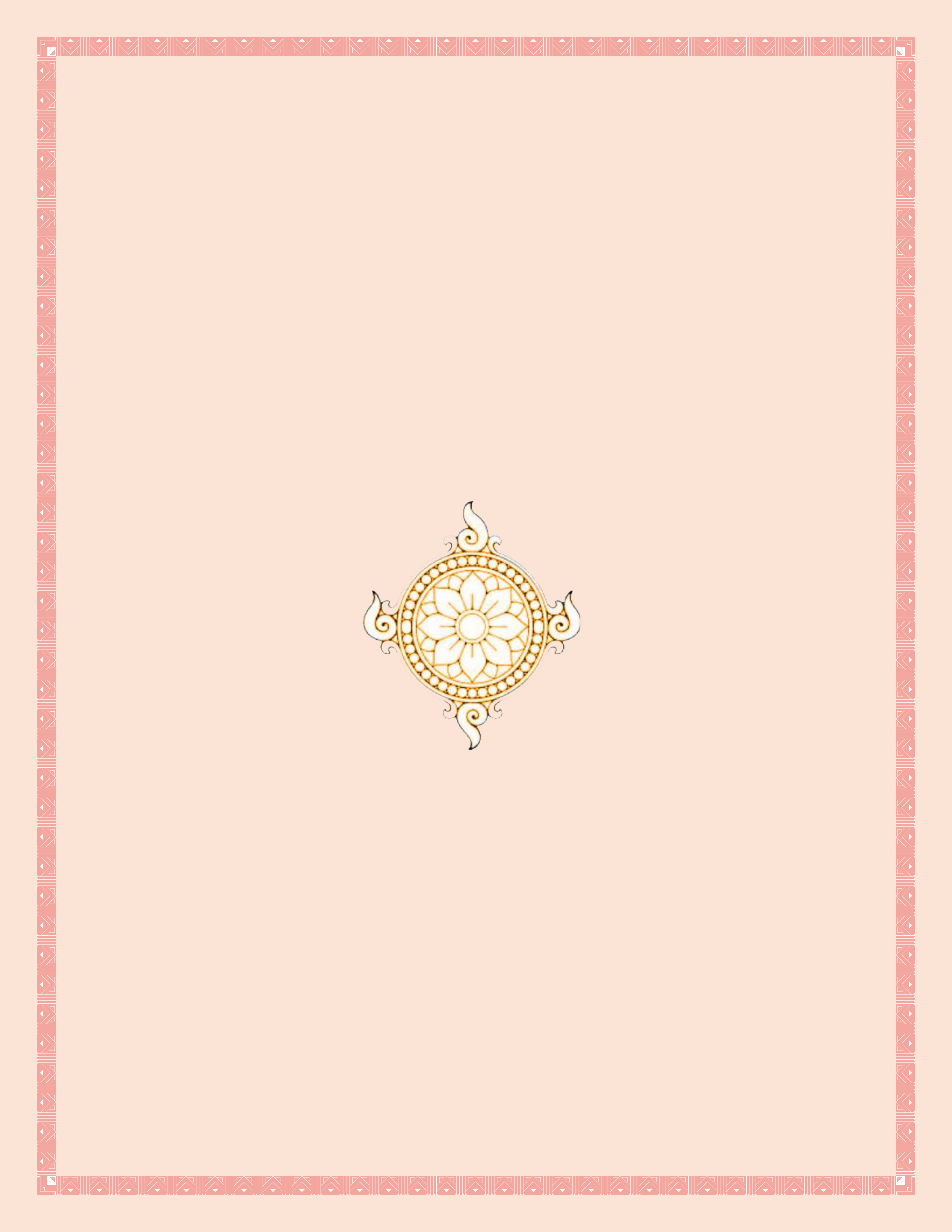


SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadA||

SrImate nigamAnta mahaAdeSikAya namaH||

SrImate gopAladeSika mahAdeSikAya namaH||



Slokam 41

आज्ञां ख्यातिं धनमनुचरान् आधि राज्यादिकं वा
काले धृष्ट्वा कमल वसतेः अप्यकिञ्चित् कराणि ।
पद्मा कान्तं प्रणिहितवतीं पालनेऽनन्य साध्ये
साराभिज्ञा जगति कृतिनः संश्रयन्ते दये त्वाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

Aj~nAM khyAtiM dhanamanucharAn Adhi rAjyAdikaM vA
kAle dhR^iShTvA kamala vasateH apyaki~nchit karANi|
padmA kAntaM praNihitavatIM pAlane(a)nanya sAdhye
sArAbhij~nA jagati kR^itinaH saMshrayante daye tvAm||41



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The 41st verse is the start of the fifth decad. The previous set of ten verses highlighted the role of Daya Devi in terms of securing the boon of residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill in the manner described by Svami NammAzhvar, identifying the correct path, gracing beings with Bhagavad anugraham even if they have taken residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill for some other purpose, functioning as a raft that is steered by the capable boatmen, Acharyas, to enable suffering jivans cross the ocean of samsara, blessing those jivans who take delight in getting caught up in the samsaric whirl with the grace of Lord Srinivasa leading them to perform Saranagati at the appropriate time and finally, chastising those who discard Daya Devi and Srinivasa to curry favors from Devatantara. This next set of ten verses documents the blessings of Daya Devi for those who were privy to Her grace as documented in the previous decad. The first two verses in this set of ten verses document the anubhavam of Svami Kulasekara Azhvar. The first verse in this set of ten is "Aj~nAM khyAtiM dhanamanucharAn Adhi rAjyAdikaM vA kAle dhR^iShTvA kamala vasateH apyaki~nchit karANi padmA kAntaM praNihitavatIM pAlane(a)nanya sAdhye sArAbhij~nA jagati kR^itinaH saMshrayante daye tvAm" This set of ten verses is set to mandhakrAntha meter. When one is climbing the hill, sheer exhaustion from scaling the peaks causes one to breathe heavily and climb slowly. In a like manner, these set of ten verses is set to a slow-moving meter. In



sandesa kavyams (poems containing important instruction) such as Hamsa sandesam, Meghasandesam, this meter is frequently used.

In this verse, Daya Devi is glorified as having a stature even greater than Lord Srinivasa. The question that arises then is how is this possible? In commentaries on Tiruppavai, many scholars have outlined that Bhagavad SvarUpam is quite enjoyable and satisfying. However, even more delectable than this is the enjoyment of Bhagavan nAmas - uttering them renders one extremely pure. The sheer delight gained by an understanding of these nAmas far exceeds that of Bhagavad svarUpa anubhavam. Specifically, Bhagavad svarUpam is like a solid gold bar (kaTTi pon), which is quite valuable. However, it can at best be safeguarded by storage in a locker. On the other hand, Bhagavan nAma is the like the malleable gold (paNi pon), which can be made into ornaments for adornment. Therefore, it begets a status greater than Bhagavad svarUpam. Bhagavad svarUpam characterized by pratyaksham of satyatvam, jnAnatvam, Anandatvam, amalatvam,

while valuable, is not fit for enjoyment analogous to the solid gold bar. On the other hand, Bhagavan nAmas are like the malleable gold, which can be transformed into ornaments for enjoyment. In a like manner, Lord Srinivasa is no doubt great. However, Daya Devi is even greater than Him. This is the import of the present Daya Satakam verse. The sambodhanam is daye! The next part of the tribute "sArAbhij~nA jagati kR^itinaH saMshrayante" denotes the fact that those who are well versed in essence (sAram) of the Sastras and are fortunate seek refuge in Daya Devi. This leads to the question, who are ones well versed in sAram? Who are the fortunate ones? In Srimad RahasyatrayasAram, Svami Desikan declares "asAram alpasAram ca sAram sArataram tyajet bhajet sAratamam shAstram ratnAkaramivAmrutam" The meaning of this statement is that we are Vaidikas who subscribe to the authority of the Sastras. Therefore, in matters which cannot be seen by the eyes or experienced by the senses, the words of the Sastram serve as the ultimate authority. Dharmam is elaborated upon by the Sastram. If one undertakes this task, the resulting benefit is moksham. We cannot behold this benefit visually. Neither is it something that can be experienced through the sense organs. For example, if there is a fire, one knows from instinct guided by the senses that it will burn and therefore one must stay away. However, unlike this moksham is not something that can be experienced through the senses. Hence, the declaration of the Sastram has to be accepted as is. This is known as pramANam. Those who accept this are known as pramANikas. Those who mis-interpret the Sastras and their purport while conveying a message that is exactly the opposite of that intended by the Sastras is known as asAram. This applies to both the expositor as well as the message and hence needs to be discarded. Next alpasAram is elaborated upon. In theVedam, there are declarations for begetting pashu (cows), Ayush (long life), Arogyam (good health), and putran (son). These are worldly benefits and hence denoted as alpa sAram. The alpa sAram portions too can be ignored. When asAram and alpa sAram are discarded, other benefits offered by Vedic prescriptions such as svarga vAsam and the like may seem great (sAram). For example, the means to attain Svarga lokam through declarations such as "eteta svargatAmaH" However, this too is trivial and needs to be discarded. Even greater than this are the portions of the Vedam that pertain to Atma viShayam (matters pertaining to the Atma). Enjoyment of the Atma is called kaivalyam and is denoted by sArataram. Thus, asAram, alpa sAram, seemingly sAram, and sArataram need to be given up in favor of paramAtma anubhavam. This is denoted by sAratamam shAstram. This portion of the sastram than instructs us in knowledge about the ParamAtma needs to be carefully assimilated since it paves the way for one's

wellbeing. This is akin to the churning of the milky ocean where a number of objects of value arose. Along with these came poison. However, just as these were discarded in favor of amrutam that came about from the churning of the ocean, one needs to focus on the sAratamam (knowledge of the ParamAtma) to the exclusion of all other portions. Therefore, that which is sAram is the knowledge of ParamAtma, the means to attain Him and knowledge of everything else that is completely dependent upon Him. One who is aware of sAram is denoted by the Daya Satakam salutation "sArAbhij~nAr". Even among those possessed of the knowledge of sAram, it is important to know who among them has a clear understanding of sAram. These are denoted as BhagyavAns - the fortunate ones. There lived a mahAn in Srirangam, who was instructing his disciples in Vedantic truths through the mode of kAlakshepam. During these times, another mahAn who lived on uncha vritthi (begging for alms to meet daily needs of tiruvaradhanam and feeding one's family) used to visit him. (This was a common practice in days of yore, where scholarly Brahmins would take a bowl to collect the offerings from various people residing in their town, all the time engaged in reciting some stotram or the other and accepting whatever is offered.) The visitor would come every day and be received with great respect by the scholar engaged in kalakshepam, even though the visitor was not as well versed in the sastras as the Svamin offering kalakshepam. The disciples too would be angered that the kalakshepam flow is being interrupted by the visitor and would wonder why their preceptor was according so much respect to the visitor by stopping his discourse and standing up to welcome the visitor. They even approached their preceptor with this question. In reply the preceptor said that the answer to their question would become known the next day. The next day as per his routine, the visitor arrived and was respectfully welcomed. After he had received the offerings of rice and other grains, the preceptor asked him "Svami, I have a question" The visitor replied with great humility out of extreme naichyam (self depracation) "Svamin! You are well versed with the Sastras and widely read. Therefore, I am not sure I will be able to answer your question." The preceptor said "No this is not true. I need to get a clarification from you." The visitor replied, "I shall try to answer your question to the extent permitted by my knowledge." The preceptor enquired "Who is Paratatvam? Some parts of the Vedam glorify Brahma as Paratatvam while other places glorify Rudra in the same vein and some others glorify Indra as Param. Therefore, please resolve this confusion for me." The visitor was visibly shocked and remarked "I have performed a grave apacharam. I have been feeding myself with grains offered in uncha vritthi by one who does not have a clear understanding that Lord Narayana

is the Paratatvam. Is it not a sin to partake of such offering? Therefore, I shall return all the grains that I have accepted so far from you Svamin. I do not want to have anything to do with you." As soon as he heard this the preceptor was delighted beyond measure and remarked "Svamin! I do not have the slightest doubt that Lord Narayana is the Paratatvam. However, these disciples of mine were envious of the respect I was according to you daily. It is only to reveal to them that you have a clear understanding of Paratatvam that I asked this question. Rest assured that you can accept the rice and grains from me to support your uncha vritthi."



Para tattvam

The clarity of understanding of Paratatvam is contained in the salutation "brahmANaM shitikaNTha~nca yAshcAnyadevatAH smR^itAH | pratibuddhA na sevante yasmAt parimitaM phalam" Those possessed of great intellect do not engage in worship of Brahma, Rudra, or other devatas due to the fact that they can only confer worldly benefits (refer to the elaboration of parimita phala sangAt from the previous verse). However, they are incapable of granting moksham. In a prior verse, the greatness of Daya Devi was elaborated upon through the description of Her enormous help to jivans, who come seeking worldly benefits, to gain moksham. In the Tiruvaimozhi, Svami NammAzhvar declares "onRum devum ulakum uyirum maRRum yAtum illA anRu nanmukhan tannODu tEvar ulakODuyir paDaittAn kunRam pOl maNi mADa nIDu tirukkurukUr atanuL ninRa AtipirAn niRka maRRaitteivam nADutirE" The Azhvar laments that when Lord Narayana of such magnificence is standing ready to grace us why seek out other devatas for worship? In the context of the Daya Satakam salutation, those having clear knowledge of

Lord Narayana as Paratatvam without ambiguity, are saluted as "kR^itinaH" or the fortunate ones (bhAgyavans). What do these bhAgyavans who possess clear knowledge of sAram do? They have established that "Aj~nAM khyAtiM dhanamanucharAn Adhi rAjyAdikaM vA kAle dhR^iShTvA kamala vasateH apyaki~nchit karANi" namely even the elevated stature of Brahma is impermanent. Brahma's aishvaryam is derived from the fact that his origin comes from the lotus emanating from the Lord's navel. He is constantly engaged in reciting the Vedam with the four mouths corresponding to his four heads. He is assigned the task of creation of the universe by the Lord as described in the salutation "kamala vasateH". This seems like the greatest status that one can beget. The next salutation "api" suggests that the status of Siva, Indra and other Devatas is included here. The viseSham for Siva is described by the statement "mahadevaH sarva medhe mahAtma udvA AtmAnam deva devo babhUva samharta" He became the Deva of the Devas. How did he beget this elevated status? This is answered by the fact that he performed a yAgam known as sarva medha, wherein he submitted himself as the havis. As a consequence, he came to be known as Mahadevan. He is tasked by the Lord to destroy everything in the universe at the appropriate time. He is also known as sarvaj~nyan - or "all-knowing" one. He has been the parama bhAgavata as seen from the PurANam declaration "vaiShNavAnAM yathA shambu". However, even one of this elevated stature occupies this spot only for a finite period. Therefore, this too is impermanent. Next comes the role of Indra. This is described in the salutation "yo vritram avadhIt" One who is endowed with great strength destroyed Vritra. He is the Lord of Svarga lokam. However, even this status is not permanent and comes to an end at a certain time. "Aj~nyAm" is the Daya Satakam tribute which denotes the fact that the status of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra while lofty has finite duration and thus comes to a prescribed end in accordance with the Sastras. This is the reference to the Upanishad statement intended to provide a comparative analysis of the varying degrees of greatness and the enjoyment of happiness for different lokas/persons occupying those lokas. "yuvA syAt sAdhu yuvAdhyAyakaH, AshiShTho draDhiShTho baliShThaH, tasyeyam pR^ithvi sarvA vittasya pUrNAH syAt, sa eko mAnuSha AnandaH" This reflects the fact that nobody likes to age. Therefore, the glory of youth is illustrated here. Not only one who is youthful, but also one who is possessed of knowledge of the Vedas to instruct his sons is glorified in this tribute with the specific term "yuvAdhyAyakaH". However, this in itself is insufficient. What if the individual thus endowed is suffering constantly from one ailment or the other? Even though the individual is well versed with the Scriptures and is able to instruct others, if one is

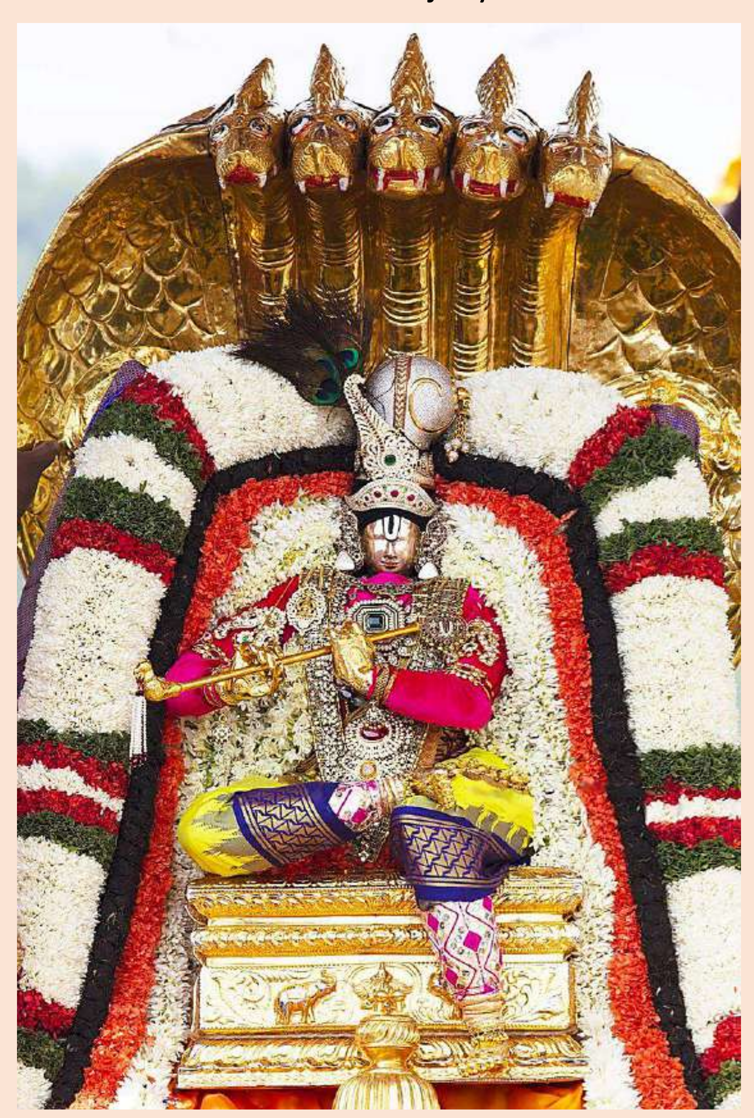
affected by ill health that does not permit involvement in Bhagavat Kaimkaryam such as utsavams for Varadaraja Perumal or Thuppul Deepa Prakasar, the learning becomes of limited value. Therefore, the Vedam declares "AshiShTho draDhiShTho baliShThaH" namely one who is learned in the Vedas and is capable of instructing others, having good health (free from illness), possessing bodily strength, and firmness of mind is glorified here. Not stopping here, the Upanishad further elaborates that even these are insufficient. One needs to be wealthy to support the demands of one's family and other components of society. Therefore, one endowed with all the previously enumerated qualities and possessing in addition all conceivable wealth in this world enjoys a state of happiness described as "mAnuSha AnandaH"



In a like manner the Upanishad describes the delight of manushya gandharva, deva gandharva and the like in a step-by-step manner culminating in Brahma Ananda, the happiness of one occupying the position of the four faced Brahma. Svami Desikan alludes to the fact that this is not permanent and that it lasts only for a finite period even though this period is considerably longer than one can comprehend. Those who recognize the impermanence of the lofty states of Brahma, Siva, and Indra are described by Svami Desikan as "sAraj~nyar" (ones who possess knowledge of sAram). Regardless of one's status (rich or poor) they need a few people who will readily do their bidding. This is captured in the Daya Satakam salutation "Aj~nAM khyAtiM

dhanamanucharAn" This salutation describes the fact that one who is in the state of giving orders to others can easily incur a role reversal in future, where he is subject to the orders of the very same people, who he once commanded. This can easily be seen when one is working. As long as one is employed one can command and instruct subordinates to perform various tasks. However, upon retirement they would be very much at the mercy of those very subordinates to gain favors from the organization they worked for. This is also commonly encountered in families where children while growing up are under the command of their parents. However, when parents age and have to be cared for by their children, they are forced to obey the commands of their children. Thus, commanding influence is not permanent. The next thing that one craves for is "KhyAtiM" (praise). Those seeking praise go to great extents and make many sacrifices. However, even this is not lasting. In this context it is important to examine the case of MAndhAta (an ancestor of Lord Rama), who attained Svarga loka. Upon reaching Svarga loka, he was seated in a throne equivalent to Indra's throne. This came about due the fact that MAndhAta had performed numerous karmas and yagas to acquire this status. Needless to say, Indra could not tolerate another receiving honors equivalent to his own. Out of great envy, he posed a loaded question to MAndhAta "In your opinion, in the BhU lokam, who is it that is hailed as Dharmishta (performer of Dharma karyas)?" This is a loaded question since it demands an honest answer. In truth MAndhAta was peerless as a Dharmishta and was hailed for this in BhU lokam. On the other hand, stating this honestly would incur the stain of self-praise. Accordingly, he honestly said that "today I am glorified in the earth as Dharmishta" However, due to uttering self praise, Indra declared that this was an exclusion for Svarga loka residents and expelled MAndhAta from Svargam. Therefore, it must be understood that all praise lasts for a finite time and comes to an end. Next comes the salutation "Dhanam" denoting the fact that there is nobody spared of the allure of wealth. This attraction can become seemingly endless. The acquisition of great wealth makes one a slave to wealth to the extent that one is prepared to give up one's life for the sake of wealth. The tribute "anucharAn" from the Daya Satakam verse refers to the fact that a wealthy person will have some close followers, who may seek to gain his wealth by devious means including actively plotting and executing his death. Then follows the tribute from the Daya Satakam verse "Adhi rajyAdhikam va" denoting the fact that kings who inherit this title too are constantly in fear of adversaries, who constantly seek to undermine them with a view to annexing or taking over the kingdom by devious means including orchestrating the death of the king in extreme cases. Therefore, it is clear that the

pursuits described thus far give rise to viparIta phalan (results that are detrimental) Therefore, the tribute "kAle dhR^iShTvA apyaki~nchit karANi dhR^iShTvA" is examined. This refers to the fact that one who realizes the detrimental results yielded by the pleasures of command/influence, praise, wealth, and kingship and is aware of their impermanence is the one that has developed knowledge of sAram and is hence known as sAraj~nyar.



The day when even the Sun, Moon, Indra, Rudra, and Brahma ceased to exist, our emperumAn, Lord Narayana, was present.

In the Paramapada sopanam, Svami Desikan declares "tantirankaL aLavilarAi tanattAl mikka tAr vEntar tozha ANDAr mANDAr cantiranum cUriyanum vIyum kAlam tArakaiyin vaDamum aRRu tanivAn ALum intiranum Er uyarttha Ican tAnum Ir iraNDu mukattAnum illA annAL nam tirumAl nilai kaNDAr nAkam ellAm narakenRu naRpatamE nADu vArE" This denotes the fact that kings who had a great following and were saluted by many ruled for a time and eventually passed away. The day when even the Sun, Moon, Indra, Rudra, and Brahma ceased to exist, our emperumAn, Lord Narayana, was present. Therefore, those who understand this and recognize the plight of Brahma, Rudra, Indra, and others is verily a narakam and instead resort to the feet of Lord Narayana as their sole refuge, beget great wealth and attain lasting bliss. Next the focus turns to the salutation saMshrayante". The feet of the Lord that serve as the refuge to enable this lasting wealth has a lofty status no doubt.



However, Daya Devi begets a status that is even greater than these sacred feet. It is important to understand that this tribute is rendered in the spirit of nahi-nindA nyAyam. Namely, demonstrating the greatness of one object over another by way of comparison with an equally great object and showing that the former tops the latter. How does this come about? This is exposited in the tribute "ananya sAdhye pAlane(a)nanya padmA kAntaM praNihitavatIM." Namely, the task of rescuing suffering jIvans in samsaram, which is impossible for anyone else except the Lord, is facilitated by Daya Devi using some pretext or the other. In fact, She has the Lord at Her command and instructs Him to rescue these suffering beings (Her children). In this context, the sport of creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe, that the Lord engages in is controlled by Daya Devi, who instructs the Lord to use Brahma, and Rudra as instruments to effect the tasks of creation and destruction. However, the critical task of protection of suffering jivans is carefully assigned by Daya Devi to the Lord Himself. The inner meaning is that the tasks of creation and destruction are carried out by the Lord who is the indweller for Brahma and Rudra, while the task of protection is carried out by the Lord in His original svarUpam. The assignment is truly the orchestration of Daya Devi. What is the task of protection of the universe it may be asked? This is reflected in the tribute "na sampadhAm samAhAre vipadhAm vinivartane samartho dR^iShyate kascit samvirA puruShottamam nahi pAlana sAmarthyam rithe sarveshvare harau" that is there is no one as capable as Lord Narayana who ensures that all Sampath (wealth) is properly acquired and all obstacles for acquiring this wealth are removed. The wealth here refers to Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Lord Narayana is the one who bestows this Kaimkarya sAmrAjyam. He grants the supreme wealth (aishvaryam) of moksham. Vipat denotes the obstacles that come in the way of acquiring this supreme wealth. This refers to one's karma that results in a mountainous sin-pile. Lord Narayana alone is capable of ensuring the destruction of this sin-pile. No one else besides Lord Narayana is capable of the task of protecting the universe and ruling over the worlds in this manner. Therefore, the Lord assigns the task of creation and destruction to Brahma and Rudra, respectively, at the behest of Daya Devi and retains the crucial function of protecting the entire universe again at the command of Daya Devi. The task of protection denotes aniShTa nivR^itti (removal of obstacles) and iShTa prApti (gaining the desired fruit). Therefore, those who realize this great upakAram of Daya Devi and seek Her out as their sole refuge are the ones blessed with true knowledge of "sAram" and are the fortunate ones (BhAgyavans)."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa is the protector, unique and singular, for all the worlds. None else can manage it, and You induce Him. Hence, I can as well say that the whole protection of all the worlds is Your arena. You are the master-performer. This being so, how is it that commonly people resort to all and sundry Devas seeking their protection? The chief Deva among them is Brahma. To him and to all else also, the power, the position, the reputation, the wealth, the retinue, the paraphernalia attending on him for doing services and the suzerainty-these must be of the first rank for Brahma and have been cited here. However, all these are trivial and of no significance. They were acquired by long arduous efforts of penance. However, they would face an end. Only a few fortunate souls realize that these possessions are worth nothing and not care about them. They would remember that You, inducing Lord Srinivasa are the sole factor. They worship You. They are the people with real discernment.”



Slokam 42

प्रजापत्य प्रभृति विभवं प्रेक्ष्य पर्याय दुःखं

जन्माकाङ्क्षन् वृषगिरि वने जग्मुषां तस्थुषां वा।

आशासानाः कतिचन विभोस्त्वत्परिष्वङ्ग धन्यैः

अङ्गीकारं क्षणमपि दये हार्द तुङ्गैरपाङ्गै ॥ ४२ ॥

prajApatya prabhR^iti vibhavaM prekShya paryAya duHkhaM

janmA kA~NkShan vR^iShagiri vane jagmuShAM tasthuShAM vA|

AshAsAnAH katicana vibhostvat pariShva~Nga dhanyaiH

a~NgIkAraM kShaNamapi daye hArda tu~NgairapA~Ngai||42



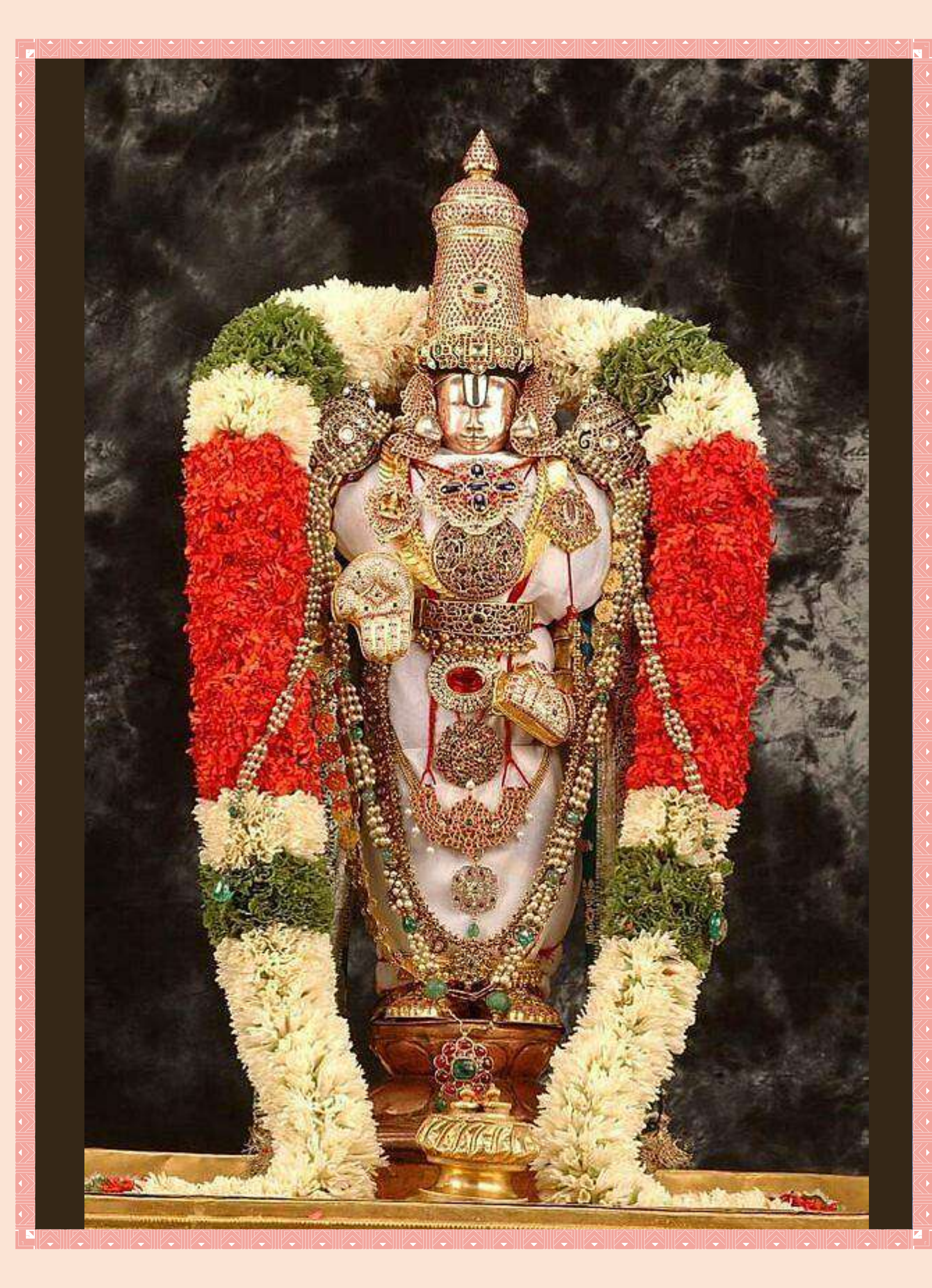
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The next verse is "prajApatya prabhR^iti vibhavaM prekShya paryAya duHkhaM janmA kA~NkShan vR^iShagiri vane jagmuShAM tasthuShAM vA|AshAsAnAH katicana vibhostvat pariShva~Nga dhanyaiH a~NgIkAraM kShaNamapi daye hArda tu~NgairapA~Ngai||" The last verse identified the saraj~nyars and bhAgyavAns. Here Svami Desikan takes it one step further and declares that foremost beings are those that have visited the Venkatam Hill and obtained Bhagavad anubhavam of Lord Srinivasa on account of Daya Devi. The thought process of sarabhij~nyars identified in the previous verse is now outlined. Their singular purpose is to be affiliated with the Venkatam hill as an animate or inanimate object so that they can be privy to the grace of Lord Srinivasa through His kataksham. This is their ultimate purushartham. "Arthobhij~nyAsi" An ekAnti is one who engages in sole worship of Lord Narayana for obtaining all purusharthas - Dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. For example, one in need of money, or seeking educational progress, or the bhogam of svarga loka, who seeks them only from Lord Narayana is an ekanti. A paramaikanti is one whose sole objective is that of uninterrupted Kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple. This is the ultimate purushartham for them. Thus, even moksham becomes a by-product of this purushartham. In the emmAvITTu tiramum pasuram, Svami NammAzhvar was engaged in a communion with the Lord. The Lord offered the Azhvar the ultimate boon of moksham since He was pleased with the Azhvar's tribute. To this the Azhvar enquired "My Lord! What awaits me in



moksham?" The Lord answered "You will be freed from the cycle of births and deaths and will have the same form as Lord Narayana as described by vishoka (one who knows no sorrow), vimR^ityuH (one who never dies) ,apipAsAH (unaffected by thirst), apahatapApma (untouched by sins), vijighatsaH (one who does not crave for food), satyakAma (fond of the truth), satya sankalpa (one who wills the truth), esha Atma (of the nature of the soul)." The Azhvar then declared "If this is so, I do not want moksham." The Lord was quite astonished by this and further enquired "Why so?" To this the Azhvar replied "My Lord! I merely seek kaimkaryam for You. You did not mention this in Your offer of moksham. If this kaimkaryam, which is my sole objective, is available for me in moksham, I shall gladly accept it. If not, nothing is lost. I shall continue the kaimkaryam in BhUlokam." The Azhvar in his tribute "emmA vITTu tiRamum ceppam nin cem mA pAta paRpu talai cErttollai kaimmA tunpam kaDinta pirAnE amma aDiyEn vEnDuvatItE" seeks the bhagyam of placement of the Lord's foot on his head. One whose sole objective is bhagavad kaimkaryam as outlined by Svami NammAzhvar is a ParamaikAnti. Tondaradipodi Azhvar salutes Lord Ranganatha in the pasuram "pacchai mA malai pOl mEni pavazhavAi kamala cenkaN AcyutA! amarar ErE! Ayar tam kozhuntE! ennum iccuvai tavira yAn pOi intira lOkam ALum accuvai perinum vENDEn arankamA nakaraLulAnE" Here it must be noted that the Azhvar's reference to Indira lokam is not Svargam ruled over by Indra, who killed Vritra. Instead, it is a reference to Sri Vaikuntam itself. The Azhvar is so mesmerized by the beauty of Lord Ranganatha that he is willing to give up residence in Sri Vaikuntam to engage in Kaimkaryam for Lord Ranganatha. Svami Desikan echoes a similar sentiment in the Varadaraja Panchasat salutation "vaikuNThavAse(a)pi namebhilAShaH" This is the state of ParamaIkantis. In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan refers to the state of a Paramaikantin in the context of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. Kulasekara Azhvar in the Perumal Tirumozhi outlines the manner of conduct to be adopted by one interested exclusively in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. Specifically, the fourth decad has the evocative tribute "paDiyAi kiDantu un pAvazha vAi kAnpEnE" The Daya Satakam salutation "prajApatya prabhR^iti vibhavaM" mirrors the Azhvar tribute from the fourth decad with reference to the state of "caturmukhaIshvaryam", namely the elevated state of Brahma. This is no doubt a prominent position since all devas seek refuge in him when encountering difficulties. The tribute "prekShya" denotes the fact that upon careful examination reflecting the import of the Upanishad statement "parIkShalokAn karmacitAn". For example, one living in a village thinks that living in a city like Chennai is glamorous. One residing in Chennai thinks that the life afforded by Mumbai is even better,

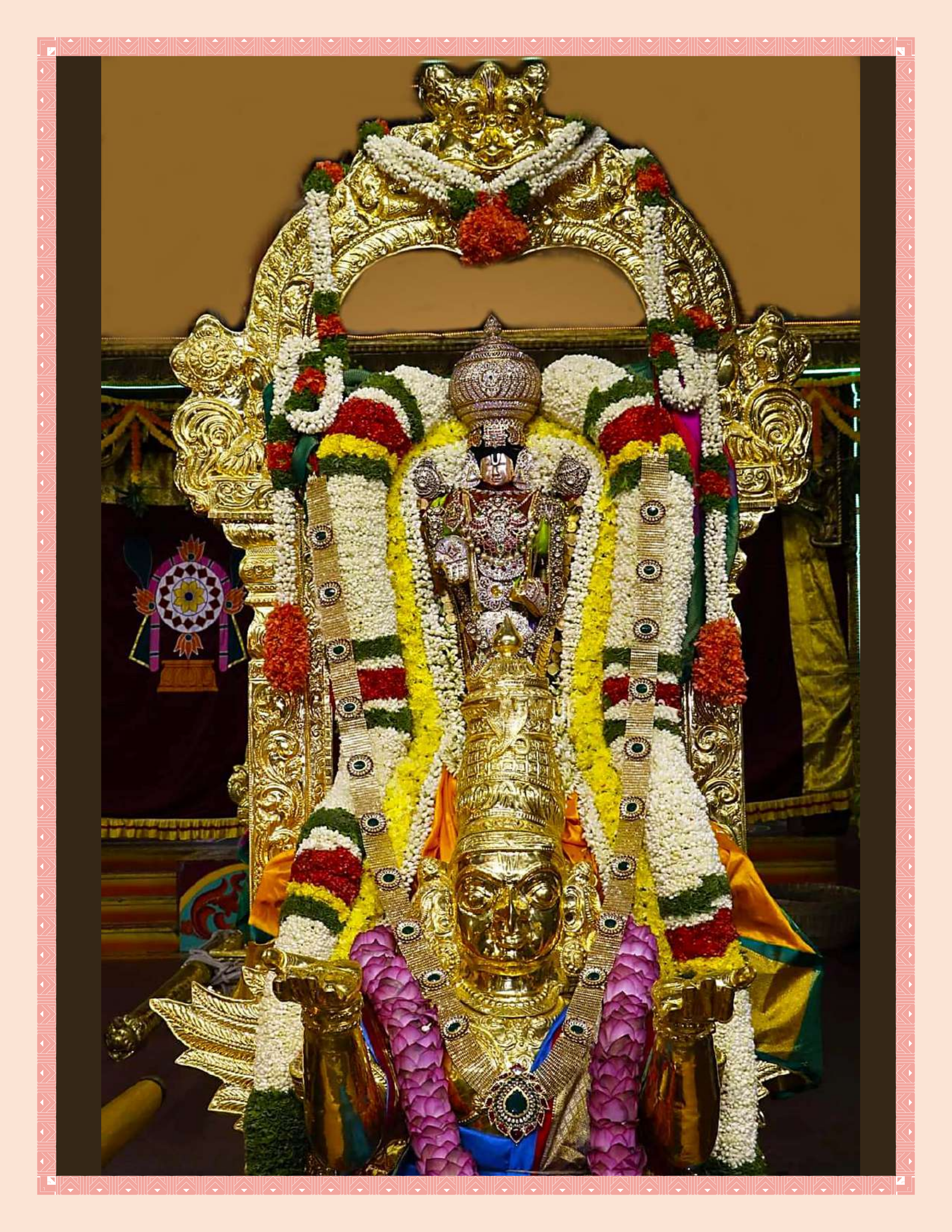
while one residing in Mumbai thinks of a life of ultimate comfort as residence in USA. However, only when one experiences residence in these various places does one get exposed to the difficulties inherent therein. If this is the state for residing in various places on earth, one can only wonder about the complexity of challenges faced in the process of residing in Brahma lokam. After close examination (prekSha) the conclusion is that the state of Brahma is one of "paryAya duHkham" as outlined in this verse. The import of this salutation is that even though Brahma lokam seems to offer great pleasure, it is in fact a synonym (paryAya) for sorrow. Just like ghaTa and kalasha are synonyms for vessels, in this case the term sukham is actually a synonym for sorrow. Only one who occupies the place of a king knows the difficulties of the position. It is a trivial and impermanent benefit. It causes great sorrow. This is the state of "prajApatya prabhR^iti vibhavaM" It is common to seek ayur-Arogyam-aIshcaryam (long life, good health free from diseases, and wealth). While these are seemingly great boons to seek, they in fact result in great sorrow. In accordance with the declaration "arogyam indriyolbhaNyam aIshvaryam shatrusAmita viyogo bandhavAirAyuH ….", when one is blessed with arogyam (good health), the sense organs are strong and hence wish to act in a manner of their pleasing. This results in actions which are contrary to the shastras, accruing great sins. Therefore, having Arogyam is pointless. Next comes aishvaryam. One who is endowed with aishvaryam incurs plenty of enemies, who actively seek to harm the wealthy individual. Therefore, this too is dangerous. Then, ayush is examined. If one is blessed with long life (say a hundred years), but loses all his near and dear ones much earlier "viyogaH bAndhavaIH - separation from near and dear onees), the gift of long life verily becomes a curse. Therefore, all of these give rise to no happiness. Instead, the outcome is only one of increased sorrow. This sorrow continues to a greater extent, when one seeks out the pleasures of Brahma lokam. Hence, it is merely accruing more sorrow in the name of seeking greater pleasure. Thus, it is pointless to seek these pleasures. It may then be asked what should be sought? This is addressed in the salutation "tvat pariShva~Nga dhanyaiH hArda tu~NgaiH vibho apA~Ngai a~NgIkAraM kShaNamapi AshAsAnAH" One who is graced by the embrace of Daya Devi is the fortunate one. The overflowing grace of Lord Srinivasa emanating from His heart floods one thus blessed by Daya Devi. If this causes Lord Srinivasa to declare "He belongs to Me" even if it be for a second such an individual is truly blessed. Those who desire the compassionate eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa even for a second as a consequence of this process are the "ashAsanAH". The greatness of these beings is further extolled in this verse. The salutation "tvat pariShva~Nga dhanyaiH" is again highlighted.



The loftiness of Daya Devi comes to the fore again as has been the case numerous times in this stotram. The essential nature of Daya Devi is described in the statement "prayojanamanudhiShya duHkha nivAraNa iccha" namely one whose sole objective is to remove the sorrows of others without expecting any benefit for Herself. The three terms daye, hArdham, and apAngaiH are used to glorify Daya Devi in this context. hArdam denotes the affection of Daya Devi in Her role of granting the wishes of Her seekers, apAngaIH denotes the compassionate eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa allied with Daya Devi. It is important to note that if one seeks the eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa in isolation, it would easily result in the Lord viewing the enormous sin-pile of the seeker, which would rouse His anger, incur His displeasure, and result in punishment. However, when allied with Daya Devi, the result becomes a polar-opposite in that the individual now becomes privy to the extraordinary compassion of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, it must be understood that bereft of Daya Devi the Lord's glances result in detrimental consequences (punishment). There was a mahan, Tirukacchi Nambi, who rendered ChAmara kaimkaryam (fan service) to Lord Varadaraja. The Lord used to engage in conversation with Sri Nambi. In his DevarAja Ashtakam tribute Sri Nambi declares "tvadIkShaNa sudhAsindhu vIcivikShepa shikaraIH kAruNyAmrutAnItaIH shItalaIrabhiShinca mAm" The import of this verse is that Sri Nambi seeks an abhishekam in the compassionate eye-glances of Lord Varadaraja. Sri Nambi qualifies this with the statement, that it is not merely the eye-glances of Lord Varadaraja that he seeks but the eye-glances laden with compassion again recognizing the importance of Daya in seeking this benefit. It is only when allied with Daya Devi that the Lord's eye-glances beget a disposition of granting what His seekers long for. Lord Varadaraja is saluted as "karutavaram tarum daiva perumAL vantAr" namely even a formal prayer is not necessary. Lord Varadaraja discerns the wishes of His seekers and at that moment itself He wills that these be granted. The use of bahuvachanam for apAngaIH needs to be appreciated. In a prior verse Svami Desikan saluted the torrential flow of Daya Devi in the same spirit as "vAridhAra visheShaIH" referring to the copious flow from the hill streams at the Venkatam Hill. In the Sri Stuti, Svami Desikan seeks the compassionate glances of Mahalakshmi Thayar in the tribute sAnuprAsa prakaTita dayaIH sAndravAtsalyadigdhaIH amba snigdhaIramR^italaharI labdhasa bhramhacharyaIH gharme tApatraya viracite gADhataptam kShaNam mAm Akincanyaglapitamanaghaïrar drayethAH kaTAkShaIH". In this tribute Svami Desikan seeks to be drenched by the cool compassionate eye-glances of Thayar by way of providing relief from samsaric heat which is burning his entire body. Thus,

it becomes clear that when the eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa are accompanied by Daya Devi, vAtsalyam (love of a cow for its calf) is bound to follow. This is sought in this Daya Satakam verse by Svami Desikan for a fleeting second through the declaration "kShaNamapi AshAsAn". Svami Alavandar echoes the same sentiment in the Stotra ratnam salutation "sakR^it tvadAkAra vilokanAshayA tR^iNikR^itAnuttamabhuktimuktibhiH mahAtmabhirmAmavalokyatAm naya kShaNe(a)pi te yadviraho(a)tiduHsahaH" Who are the mahatmas as described by Svami Alavandar? This is described in the Garuda PuraNam salutation "yan muhurtam kShaNam vApi vAsudevo na cintyate sA hAniH mahat chidhram sA bhrAntiH sa ca vikriyA" namely one who regards even a moment of non-contemplation on Lord Vasudeva as a moment of grave consequence and a difficult state is a Mahatma. In this context, it is instructive to note the thought process of the residents of Ayodhya in the Srimad Ramayanam salutation "yashca rAmam na pashyetu yam ca rAmo na pashyati nindita sa vaset loke svAtmapi enam vigarhate". The meaning of this tribute is that the birth of one who lives in Ayodhya and has not beheld Rama or one who resides in Ayodhya and has not been seen by Rama is truly wasted. What have I done to deserve this plight? This reflects the thought process of the Mahatma described by Svami Alavandar. However, in the present day it is quite common to see one engaged in watching TV when the procession of the Lord arrives at one's doorstep instead of coming out and offering respectful salutation. This merely illustrates the fact that these people are not graced with the same elevation of mind as the inhabitants of Ayodhya.

In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, those described as "ashAsAnAH" long for the compassionate Daya Devi allied eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa much in the same manner as the residents of Ayodhya. The appeal of these "ashAsAnAH" to Lord Srinivasa is not merely seeking residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill but to become a sentient or insentient object associated with the Venkatam hill to derive the benefit of the Daya laden Srinivasa kataksham. The reference here is to Svami Kulasekara Azhvar's tribute "ponmalaimEl EtEnum AvEnE". In the opening verse of the fourth decad of Perumal Tirumozhi, the Azhvar states his intent through the tribute "UnERu celvattu uDaR piRavi yAn vEnDEn AnERezh venRAn aDimai tiRam allAl kUnERu cankam iDattAn tan venkaDattu kOnEri vAzhum kurukAi pirappEnE" which documents the Azhvar's desire to be born as a stork at the Venkatam hill. The Azhvar goes a step further in the next verse and seeks to be born as a fish in the tribute "mInAi pirakkum" out of the thought that the Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi may come to the lake where the Azhvar resides as a fish and thus he can be privy to the Daya-laden eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa.



The Azhvar then resolves he can do better and in the third verse seeks to be "pon vaTTil piDittuDanE puka peruvEn AvEnE". (In days of yore, after kings partook of betel leaves and betel nuts, they would be offered a spit bowl to discard the remains from their mouths.) Here the Azhvar desires to be be born as one who holds the spit bowl that is used by Lord Srinivasa so that the Daya-laden eye-glances of Lord Srinivasa are guaranteed to fall on him. Even today during Garudotsavam for Lord Srinivasa, one can see many people in the Vahanam. Specifically, there will be a Svamin nicely dressed, adorned in silk and holding an "aDakaai peTTi", a box containing the betel leaves and betel nuts. Inside the box is a small container used as the Lord's spit bowl, which enables the Lord to discard the remains of the offering of betel leaves and betel nuts, to remind Bhagavatas of the Azhvar's anubhavam. Here it may be asked "saliva is considered ashuddham (impure). How is it that it is accepted in this case? This is answered by the fact that common people's saliva is indeed impure. However, since it comes from the Lord's mouth it is extremely pure and sacred". Testimony in support of this position can be seen from the Srimad Bhagavatam, which documents the greatness of the Yamuna river coming about on account of Lord Krishna engaging in sport with the Gopikas and discarding the remaining water into the river from his mouth after cleansing. This is also alluded to in the Tiruppavai Pasuram-"mAyanai mannuvaDamaturaimAintanai". Using this thought process, the Azhvar seeks increasingly better ways to engage in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa to obtain his Daya-laden eye-glances in successive Pasurams culminating in the ninth Pasuram with the declaration "aDiyArum vAnavarum arambaiyarum kiDantiyankum paDiyAi kiDantu un pavalavAi kAnpEnE". This reflects the Azhvar's desire to be a step at the threshold of the shrine of Lord Srinivasa and behold His coral-lips. It may be asked why the Azhvar desires to be an inanimate object at the threshold of Lord Srinivasa's shrine and how could an inanimate object behold the Lord. When it comes to worldly matters, this is an inanimate object bereft of senses. However, when it comes to Bhagavad vishayam, there need be no doubt that the object can behold and partake of Bhagavad anubhavam. This step at the threshold of the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Srinivasa is known as Kulashekara PaDi in recognition of the Azhvar's intense desire. All Bhaktas seeking a darsanam of Lord Srinivasa can only proceed until the Kulashekara PaDi. Only the Kaimkaryaparas can cross this and enter the Sanctum Sanctorum. The Azhvar's desire to become the threshold step at the Sanctum Sanctorum of Lord Srinivasa has special significance with respect to the contact with the Lord's Feet. Svami Alavandar in the Stotraratnam salutation "kadA punaH shankha rathA~Ngakalpaka dhvajAravindA~Nkusha



vajralAnChanam trivikrama tvat caraNAmbujadvayam madIya mUrdhAnamala~nkariShyati" laments that he is waiting for the day when the Lotus feet of Lord Trivikrama can rest on his head. The import of this tribute is that during the Trivikrama avataram, all sentient and insentient beings in the universe were blessed with the touch of His Feet. Svami Alavandar's regret is that he was not born at the time of the Lord's incarnation and is therefore longing for his head to be blessed by the touch of the Lord's feet. In the Azhvar's case, he renders this benefit fait accompli since the Lord would have to place His feet on the footstep at the threshold each time He comes in and out of the Sanctum Sanctorum. This is the inner meaning for the tribute "paDiyAi kiDantu un pavalavAi kAnpEnE." The essence of the Azhvar tribute is captured by Svami Desikan in the salutation "jagmuShAM tasthuShAM vA" namely being anything sentient or insentient associated with the Venkatam hill. The issue of a footstep being made of stone being a sentient or insentient can be understood from the instance of Ahalya. Ahalya incurred a curse to become transformed into a stone. However, the dust from the Padukas of Lord Rama reconstituted her body and restored her original form. If her transformation into stone, an insentient form, and subsequent restoration to her original form took place almost as a matter of fact, then her being in the state of a stone appears almost like being in a comatose state and then being redeemed. This may not seem like much of a punishment at all. Also, this does no justice to the impact of the curse and completely ignores her travails over many years, the feeling of regret and disgust for incurring this state and the resulting tribulations. However, her Atma was fully cognizant of the impact of the curse and the attendant travails. To appreciate this better, one needs to understand from the Srimad Ramayanam that Ahalya committed a sin as seen from the statement "devaraja kutUhalAt". Ahalya for a moment was conceited that her beauty lured Indra, the king of the Devas. It was to punish this mis-guided thought that Ahalya incurred the curse from Sage Gautama. Thus, while it may appear superficially that in her stone-state Ahalya was oblivious to the heat, cold, wind, rain, and weight of people stepping on her, her Atma was fully experiencing these. Furthermore, since the consequences of curses have to be endured, Ahalya was fully aware of everything she was undergoing. In a like manner, every animate or inanimate object at the Venkatam hill has an inner sentient being, that is able to experience Bhagavad anubhavam. Maharishis request the boon of Krishna anubhavam through the salutation "patyuH prajAnAm aIshvaryam pashUnAm vA na kAmaye aham kadambo bhUyasam kundo vA yamunA taTe" The meaning of this salutation is that the Maharishis did not desire wealth, cows or progeny. Instead, they seek to

be a Kunda tree on the banks of the Yamuna river, which can be sanctified by the touch of Lord Krishna's feet. This would be the ultimate Bhagyam for them. In the AthimAnusha sthavam, Sri Kuresha declares "hA janma tAsu sikatAsu mayA na labdham rAsE tvayA virahitAH kila gopakanyAH" Lord Krishna engaged in rAsa-krIDa on the banks of the Yamuna river bringing about great joy all around. In order to make everyone appreciate the bliss that arose, Lord Krishna disappeared for a moment. The Gopikas could not bear even for a moment the separation from Lord Krishna. They saw Lord Krishna's footsteps in the sand and decided to roll in the sand so that they seek refuge in His footsteps and rid themselves of their suffering. In the Athimanusha sthavam verse, Sri Kuresha desires to be the sand that was sanctified by the touch of Lord Krishna's feet and expresses regret that he was not born at that time. The sand on the bank of the Yamuna river is rendered doubly sacred due to the touch of Lord Krishna's feet and due to contact with the bodies of uttama Bhagavatas, the Gopikas. This is very much in line with the import of the Daya Satakam verse, where ashAsAnaH desire to become anything sentient or insentient at the Venkatam hill to beget the Daya-laden kataksham of Lord Srinivasa, is mentioned. If one is fortunate to get Brahmotsava Sevai at the Venkatam hill, it is highly likely for them to beget the grace of Lord Srinivasa in this manner. One who revealed the benefit of getting this kataksham is Svami Desikan. Thus, if one becomes privy to the compassionate eye-glances of Svami Desikan, the Daya-laden kataksham of Lord Srinivasa is bound to follow."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri.U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Discerning seers longed for the Lord's Daya-laden eye-glances, may be for a mere moment. For this, they wished to be born as a plant, or animal or some being on the Hill; if such a glance falls upon them, it would be equivalent to the Lord's acceptance of their selves. Hence this wish. Such fortunate seers, who have perfect conception of what is good and what is our goal would naturally treat the seats of Devas like Brahma, Siva etc. with almost a contempt in the faith that such honors are synonymous with grief. Here Svami Desikan echoes the sentiments of Sri Kulashekara Azhvar. To stay in the hill is puNya indeed. However, the stay must be meaningful. It is not for joy, mirth, sightseeing etc. One should spend time on the hill as Nityas and Muktas do in Sri Vaikuntam (engaged in kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple)."



Slokam 43

नाभि पद्म स्फुरण सुभगा नव्य नीलोत्पलाभा

क्रीडा शैलं कमपि करुणे वृण्वती वेङ्कटाख्यम् ।

शीता नित्यं प्रसदनवती श्रद्धानावगाह्या

दिव्या काचिज्जयति महती दीर्घिका तावकीना ॥ ४३ ॥

nAbhi padma sphuraNa subhagA navya nIlotpalAbhA

krIDA shailaM kamapi karuNe vR^iNvatI ve~NkaTAkhyam|

shItA nityaM prasadanavatI shraddadhAnAvagAhyA

divyA kAchijjayati mahatI dIrghikA tAvakInA|| 43



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Svami Desikan reflected the anubhavam of Svami Kulashekara Azhvar in the previous verse. In this verse, Svami Desikan expounds on the greatness of Lord Srinivasa who grants the Brahma anubhavam (anubhavam of the supreme being described by the Vedas and not to be confused with Chaturmukha Brahma). The Vedam declares "eSha brahma praviShtosmi grIShme shItamiva hradaM" namely the Brahma anubhavam is such that it is equivalent to the delight coming about from immersion in the coolness offered by a large body of water, which brings instant relief to beings from the scorching heat at the peak of the summer. This is the Bhagavad anubhavam granted by Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. The sole reason for this is Daya Devi is highlighted by Svami Desikan in this verse "nAbhi padma sphuraNa subhagA navya nIlotpalAbhA krIDA shailaM kamapi karuNe vR^iNvatI ve~NkaTAkhyam|shItA nityaM prasadanavatI shraddadhAnAvagAhyA divyA kAchijjayati mahatI dIrghikA tAvakInA"

In this verse Lord Srinivasa is depicted as a sporting arena of Daya Devi in terms of the banks of a cool body of water. Lord Narayana, who has taken up eternal residence in Sri Vaikuntam is no doubt great. However, even greater is the glory of Lord Srinivasa, who has come down in Archa form standing on top of the Venkatam hill. There is a difference between the anubhavam of Parabrahmam in Sri Vaikuntam versus the anubhavam of the archa form of the Lord. The former can only be enjoyed by a select few as described in the Upanishad salutation

“so(a)shnute sarvAn kAmAn saha brahmaNA vipasciteti”. The import of this statement is that Lord Narayana replete with His kalyaNa guNams in Sri Vaikuntam is enjoyed by a j~nAni, who has expended all his karma. The inner meaning is that only one who has a zero balance of karma (punyam and papam) can attain Sri Vaikuntam. Only upon reaching Sri Vaikuntam can one experience the Lord in his original state. This is known as paripurNa Brahma anubhavam. Thus, it becomes clear that one possessed of residual karma in the Bhulokam cannot enjoy Brahman as described in the Upanishad statement. However, Svami Desikan exposits here that the Brahma Ananda anubhavam that one begets upon reaching Sri Vaikuntam can also be experienced at the Venkatam Hill due to the grace of Lord Srinivasa. In order to appreciate this better, one needs to realize that one is constantly engaged in aparadhams (sins). Furthermore, these are committed in full view of the Lord in keeping with the statement “aj~nyA Chedi mama drohi” This highlights the fact that one who acts in violation of the Lord’s commands (Sruti and Smruti) incurs the Lord’s displeasure. We are the most egregious violators of the Lord’s commands. Our state is one of violating these commands every second of our existence. This is the aparadham and aj~nAnam. For example, when hearing upanyasams we completely subscribe to the fact that Lord Srinivasa is the supreme Brahman. However, when overcome by illness this mahavisvasam (extreme faith) falters and one seeks recourse to other means instead of engaging in singular worship of Lord Srinivasa with the utmost faith that He will come to our rescue. As a consequence, we are constantly steeped in sorrow. This comes in many forms - dearth of Bhagavad anubhavam, dearth of money, sorrow of not having children, the sorrow arising from the disappointment of not having gotten what one desires, accruing everything that is undesirable. We who are bound by karma and as a result are constantly steeped in sorrow have the good fortune that Daya Devi comes to the rescue and ensures that the elevated benefit of Brahma Ananda anubhavam that one can get only in Sri Vaikuntam is readily available to us in the form of experiencing Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. This is highlighted by Svami Desikan through the use of the analogy of a pond of cool water offering welcome relief from the sweltering heat of the summer. For this to come about, the pond needs to be surrounded by green trees, against the background of hills. In such a setting, the pond water has an inherent coolness. Not only that, the pond needs to be replete with lotus flowers, making for a beautiful sight. Additionally, the water in the pond must be pure and run deep. In places where thorns flourish, the waters tend to be hot. Instead, the pond that is visualized by Svami Desikan here is bereft of this heat and is extremely cool, soothing, comforting and fit for drinking.



Even with all this if the pond is inaccessible, it is of no value. Instead, it should be suitable for enjoyment by all. The pond should be large enough to allow huge numbers to simultaneously take a dip. Svami Desikan makes the analogy of Lord Srinivasa to such a perfect pond. It is important to note the salutation "dIrghikA tAvakInAm" which refers to Lord Srinivasa as the large pond of Daya Devi. This is like a private property, which states that it is exclusive to the owner. Lord Srinivasa is viewed as a bank on this large pond, which belongs to Daya Devi. Lord Srinivasa is very much dependent on Daya Devi. It must be noted that the Lord is completely independent to act as He wills. However, He subjugates Himself to Daya Devi. Even in the present day it is possible to see places of residence on the banks of the Kaveri River and TamraparNi River, which have steps leading to the river that the residents use to bathe in the river waters. Similarly, in Azhvar Tirunagari on the banks of the TamraparNi River, Andavan Asramam, and Ahobila Matham buildings have a set of steps leading to the river so that one can perform snAnam easily by using the river water. In a like manner, the pond of Srinivasa is the exclusive property of Daya Devi. A king while going out on a procession is accompanied by paraphernalia such as horses, elephants, and numerous servitors who offer fan service and the like. In a similar vein, Daya Devi, who is the empress among the Lord's KalyaNa guNams (auspicious qualities) carries along with Her the pond (Srinivasa) and the hill (Venkatam) as if by way of engaging in sport with us beings who are like deer. Earlier it was pointed out that the pond needed to be replete with lotuses to make for pleasant viewing. Here the pond of Lord Srinivasa, who is the supreme Brahman, is beautified on account of "nAbhi padma sphuraNa subhagA". Namely, the lotus from the Lord's navel, from which Chaturmukha Brahma arose renders this pond of Srinivasa beautiful. Subhaga is the salutation that denotes a thing replete with beauty. This pond of Lord Srinivasa is an "anyAdR^iSha taTAkam" namely that which is unique and cannot be seen elsewhere. In all worldly ponds the beautiful characteristics described earlier may exist only for a short while and disappear after a prescribed time. However, only the pond of Lord Srinivasa retains these beautiful characteristics eternally. Such beauty can exist eternally only in Sri Vaikuntam and cannot be seen elsewhere except for the Venkatam hill. The lotus in the pond described in the salutation "nAbhi padma sphuraNa subhagA" refers to the aprAkR^ita (bereft of Prakruti sambandham) form of the Lord and is thus extremely beautiful. In the Sundarabahu sthavam, Sri Kuresha describes the beauty of the Lord's eyes. These eyes are glorified uniformly as Lotus eyes. However, Sri Kuresha avers that this does not seem appropriate. A mere lotus does not do justice to the beauty inherent to the Lord's eyes. The upamanam and upameyam need to be

examined. The former needs to be an object that is of greater value than the latter. For example, while describing a common person's appearance, the usage of moon-like is appropriate since the moon's elevated characteristics are well known. The person therefore acquires greatness due to the comparison. In another context, if one is asked to describe a town and the individual responds that "this resembles Tirupati" it is appropriate due to the fact that the glory of Tirupati is well known. The town described in terms of the glory of Tirupati, therefore begets greatness. However, in the case of the Lord's eyes, the comparison to a lotus violates the upamanam upameyam rule since the beauty of the Lord's eyes far exceeds that of a lotus. "adIrghamapremadughaM kShaNojjvalaM nacoramantaH karaNasya pashyatAm anubjamabjam nu kathaM nidarshanaM vanAdrinAthasya vishAlayordR^ishoH" is the salutation from the Sundarabahu sthavam, where Sri Kuresha first notes that the lotus is not as wide as the Lord's eyes. Furthermore, the Lord's eyes exude affection, which cannot be seen in a lotus. "svAgatodhAra netram" is the salutation employed by Svami Desikan to describe the beauty of Lord Ranganatha's eyes to highlight the fact that the eyes are inviting all comers. The lotus has no such characteristic. In Devanayaka Pancasat, Svami Desikan describes the beauty of Lord Devanayaka's eyes in the salutation:

"ArdhrIbhavAmyamR^itavarShanibhairapa~NgaiH".

This tribute highlights the fact that one who goes to the shrine of Devanayaka in Tiruvahindrapuram and receives the benefit of the compassionate eye-glances of Devanayaka, has the anubhavam of the eyes enquiring "Are you alright?" This is totally non-existent in any lotus. The lotus is in full bloom only in the afternoon but at other times it is in a shrunk state. However, the lord's eyes are always in full bloom. Therefore, Sri Kuresha posits the question in his tribute "How could a lotus even offer a mechanism for comparison with the Lord's eyes, that have far superior qualities?" In keeping with the sentiments of Sri Kuresha, Svami Desikan uses the aprAkR^ita Lotus emanating from the Lord's navel for this comparison.

In the VairAgya Pancakam verse "durIshvaradvArabahirvitArdikA durAsikAyaI racito(a)yamanjaliH" Svami Desikan affirms that his eulogy is meant exclusively for Lord Narayana and Thayar and that with folded hands he submits his refusal to glorify conceited kings standing at their doorstep. Instead, Svami Desikan describes his words as "parimalamucA vAcA yAcA mahe na" The reference here is to the fact that the lotus emanating from the navel of the Lord attracts bees due to its fragrance and that Svami's words are similarly replete with fragrance (Satvika ahankaram is alluded to here). Therefore, these words are meant

exclusively for glorifying Lord Narayana. Thus, in the context of the Daya Satakam salutation, the Lord is visualized as the pond that is beautified by the aprAkR^ita lotus emanating from His navel. The next salutation "navya nIlotphalAbhA" describes the fact that the lotus should have colors of red and white mixed in. The contrast or "parabhagam" that is alluded to here is described further. The karuneital (nilotphala) flower (blue water lily), which is dark in color when mixed with the red and white color of the lotus causes a sight of rare beauty. When the archa murti of Lord Srinivasa is adorned with flower garlands, flowers of different colors, white, red, and green are used in an alternating manner. Additionally, a dark substance known as "kuruvEr", which is a fragrant substance is also submitted. Then there would be a garland of jasmines. This bank of Tiruvenkatam with respect to the description as a pond is replete with such contrast, namely a mixture of the colors of black, red, and white to create a sight of astonishing beauty. This anubhavam of Lord Narayana, which can be experienced only in Sri Vaikuntam is captured in the salutation "navya nIlotphalAbhA". Specifically, Svami Desikan visualizes the lotus from the Lord's navel as the lotus that provides the colors of red and white, while the Lord's dark hued body itself is pictured as karuneital flower. This contrast is quite stunning in terms of its beauty. The fragrance emanating from there is a reference to the Lord's countless kalyANa guNams (auspicious qualities) such as VAtsalyam, saushIlyam, and saulabhyam, which beckon all comers invitingly. Svami Desikan's usage of "kamapi" in this verse is used to document the fact that this beauty is beyond description by words. The inner meaning is that regardless of the sins committed, the Lord is prepared to grant refuge to the seeker. This transformation is verily the work of Daya Devi, who ensures that the supplicant's sins are masked from the Lord's view. Additionally, the saulabhyam denotes the Lord's assurance "do not be awe-struck by My majesty and stay away from Me. Instead come seek Me out. It is only for your sake I have taken residence in the Venkatam hill."

Next, Svami Desikan points out that this beautiful pond - namely Lord Srinivasa is entirely under the command of Daya Devi. The import of this is that the pond is Daya Devi's private property and only those who seek refuge in Her and receive Her grace can enjoy the anubhavam in this pond. Where is this pond located? Svami Desikan answers this in the tribute "ve~NkaTAkhyam krIDA shailaM vR^iNvatI" The Venkatam hill is the sporting arena for Daya Devi. To understand this better, it is important to appreciate the fact that there is a difference between Sri Vaikuntam and Tiruvenkatam. In the former place, there is no one undergoing suffering of any kind. Since only unbounded joy prevails, the role of Daya Devi

remains under wraps. However, Her enormous help to redeem those who have sinned greatly by making them seek refuge at Lord Srinivasa's feet and thus become eligible for moksham is evident only in Tiruvenkatam. Only in a town replete with poor people can the charitable disposition of a wealthy individual become apparent. If there is no one seeking alms from the wealthy individual his generosity remains unknown. In a like manner, only when Daya Devi renders timely help to those who have sinned greatly and ensures their redemption can Her greatness be appreciated. Due to this "cetana rakShaNam" (protection of sentient beings), Tiruvenkatam acquires a status even greater than Sri Vaikuntam. The sthAna visheSham of Tiruvenkatam hill in terms of "rakSha vastu lAbham" (benefit accorded to those protected by Daya Devi) is described by Svami Desikan through the salutation "ve~NkaTAkhyam krIDA shailaM vR^iNvatI" What is the visheSham for Tiruvenkatam? This is answered in the statement "anena pApa calam vai yasmAt dagdham dvijanmanaH ve~NkaTAcala ityasya prasiddhiH bhuvi vardatAm " The hill which destroys one's sins is denoted by Venkatam with vem denoting sins and kaTaH denoting their destruction. In fact, the hill literally burns up one's sins. One who is practicing a Brahma Vidya (Bhakti yogi) or one who has performed sharaNAgati has his karma (puNyam as well as pApam) destroyed in the manner of "iShikatUlam agnaU protuM pradahati" (like that of a thorn reduced to ash by the fire). That the sacred venkatam hill destroys one's sins is described in the statement "sarva pApa dAham yasmAt ve~NkaTAcalaM abhUt". The inner meaning is that this Venkatacalam hill, which is the sporting arena of Daya Devi, destroys one's sins thus enabling the seeker to gain Bhagavad anubhavam. Next the characteristics of the pond are described in the Daya Satakam salutation "nityaM shItA prasadanavatI". This pond is always cool. The waters are forever clear. Once the statement of "jalam" is made its rasam becomes self-evident. In this instance what is the rasam for the water body known as Lord Srinivasa? This is described in the Upanishad statement "raso vai saH rasa (gum)hyevAyaM labdhvA (aa)nandI bhavati" The rasam here denotes the Supreme Lord, Narayana. Having partaken of this rasam, everyone begets happiness. The feeling is akin to the distribution of kshIrAnnam (rice cooked in milk) after it is offered as naivedyam to the Lord. There is a considerably long line for receiving the prasadam. The mere fragrance of this prasadam causes one's mouth to water let alone partaking of the prasadam. In a like manner, the mere mention of this rasam known as Lord Narayana would cause one's mouth to water. This is mirrored in Svami Madhurakavi Azhvar's KaNNinuN siRutAmpu declaration "aNNikkum amutUrum ennAvukkE" and Svami NammAzhvar's tribute "tittikkum amutE" reflecting the sweetness of the Rasam

denoted by "raso vai saH". The second point of distinction for this water body known as Lord Srinivasa is tApa haram. The Upanishad statement "eSha brahma praviShtosmi grIShme shItamiva hradaM" reflects the fact that if one has anubhavam of Brahman, it relieves one of their troubles in the manner of the cool waters of a lake offering comfort from the scorching heat of the summer. Now the kind of tApam that the pond, Lord Srinivasa, offers relief from is examined. The salutation "prasadanam" denotes the fact that one is rid of one's troubles and begets clarity. The inner meaning is that the pond, Lord Srinivasa, is always cool, offering always clear water, rids one of their suffering, and graces them as outlined in the salutation "nityam shIta prasadanavatI".

In the DevanAyaka Pancasat tribute "vyAmohitA vividhabhoga marIcikAbhiH vishrAnti madhya labhate vibudhaIka nAtha gambhIrapUrNa madhuraM mama dhIrbhavantaM grIShme taTAkamiva shItamanupraviShTA" Svami Desikan declares "Oh Devanatha! We have been experiencing many bhogams (pleasures due to wealth, bodily comforts, and the like). However, these are truly like the waters of a mirage. Mistaking these mirage waters for real pleasure I had been deceived until now. However, beholding Your majestic, imposing, and welcoming persona, I have now realized one thing. All the sufferings I had endured on account of my flawed perception have been removed in the manner of the cool waters of a lake offering relief from the sweltering heat of the summer." The same thought is mirrored in the Daya Satakam tribute of this verse. This being the case, is it possible for all to take a comforting dip in this pond known as Lord Srinivasa? Svami Desikan answers this through the salutation "dIrghikAH tAvakInAm" wherein he states that this pond is the private property of Daya Devi and only those who have Her permission may enter the pond. Who are the fortunate ones to receive Daya Devi's permission? This is answered in the salutation "shraddadhAnAvagAhyA" namely those who have unshakable belief (mahAvishvAsam) in Lord Srinivasa, those who have absolute faith in the efficacy of Lord Srinivasa's Daya, are the ones who are granted permission by Daya Devi to immerse themselves in the pond known as Lord Srinivasa. The inner meaning of this tribute is that it is impossible to beget the grace of Lord Srinivasa without the intervention of Daya Devi. If one becomes conceited about the fact that they reside in the USA and have purchased in advance tickets for Lord Srinivasa's darsanam and that completing the darsanam is a mere formality which can be accomplished in about half an hour, numerous obstacles come in their way resulting in cancellation of the special sevai and allowing only Dharma darsanam. On the other hand, one who approaches the shrine of Lord Srinivasa with the thought that Daya Devi's grace needs to prevail in order to make them

privy to the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa, they beget the most astonishing sevais of the Lord most unexpectedly. Thus, one who approaches the Venkatam hill with the thought that Lord Srinivasa is both the prApyam (object of attainment) as well as the prApakam (means to attaining the object), which is facilitated by Daya Devi, alone is able to gain immersion in the pond known as Lord Srinivasa. The next tribute "mahatI dIrghikA" denotes the fact that this pond is large enough for numerous beings to simultaneously engage in immersion. The clear, cool waters of this pond retain their essential nature regardless of the number of beings that perform immersion. This is in contrast to most lakes, rivers, which offer limited water resources to permit a finite number of people to take a dip simultaneously. Even the ocean allows only for a limited number of people (even though it may be much larger than that afforded by a lake or river) to take a dip at a given time. Therefore, Svami Desikan's Daya Satakam tribute "jayati mahatI dIrghikA tAvakInAm" must be understood as the mangalasasanam to the pond denoted by Lord Srinivasa, which is large, and knows no limit for the number of people who can engage in simultaneous immersion, and yet always retains the essential nature of coolness and clear water regardless of the number of people who engage in "avagAha snAnam" (deep immersion). One may wonder, this is Daya Sataka stotram, so why is Svami Desikan offering eulogy to Her pond instead of eulogizing Daya Devi? The rationale is that if one is glorifying Daya Devi, one develops an affection for all objects animate and inanimate near and dear to Her. In fact, a tribute to these near and dear ones is greatly valued and applauded by Daya Devi. Hence, Svami Desikan renders a mangalasasanam to Lord Srinivasa with the tribute "Jayati". In the Bhagavad dhyAna sopAnam, Svami Desikan declares "pAdAmbhojaM pratiphalathi me bhAvanA dIrghikAyAm". In keeping with this tribute, the Daya Satakam verse can be viewed as a conceptualization of the Lord as a pond, wherein, the full view of Lord Ranganatha's Feet come into prominence. Such a visualization is possible only for Svami Desikan and none else."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"This verse contains a metaphorical presentation of Daya Devi possessing the Lord as a kind of cool pond. This is beautiful as it is appropriate. Victory to Daya Devi! Oh Daya Devi! You occupied Your picnic spot, a play-field, namely, Sri Venkatagiri. There You possess a large, divine pond of water, called Lord Srinivasa! There is a lovely lotus - namely in the navel of the Lord; the water is of a deep-blue color as if filled with the blue lilies, freshly blossomed; it is of the color of the Lord Himself. The pond - the Lord Himself - is ever cool; ever lucid, ever available for immersion for trustful devotees. The pond is unlike anything that is merely seen in

the countryside. It is majestic, imposing, and suitable for all to get an immersion. It will remove all the sweltering heat of the summer. All beings without difference can get relief. What a proud possession in the form of Lord Srinivasa. Oh Daya Devi! You shine in victory! This verse is loaded with layers of meanings.

In this world, the Seven Hills that have come about is a boon from Daya Devi. She has a cool pond that will remove our suffering from the sweltering summer heat, namely the three kinds of suffering (AdhyAtmika, Adi bhauktika, and Adi Daivika) of worldly existence. The pond is denoted by Lord Srinivasa. The navel lotus and the deep-blue color of the Lord are visible in the pond.

Daya Devi has chosen this Hill and this divine image of Srinivasa for the benefit of the entire humanity. Otherwise, how could all of us cure ourselves of illnesses of all sorts?

In other words, we need to remember that this Supreme Lord residing in Srivaikuntam in the company of NityasUris and Mukta jIvans (liberated souls) has come down to the earth in the Supreme Image of Venkatesha."



Slokam 44

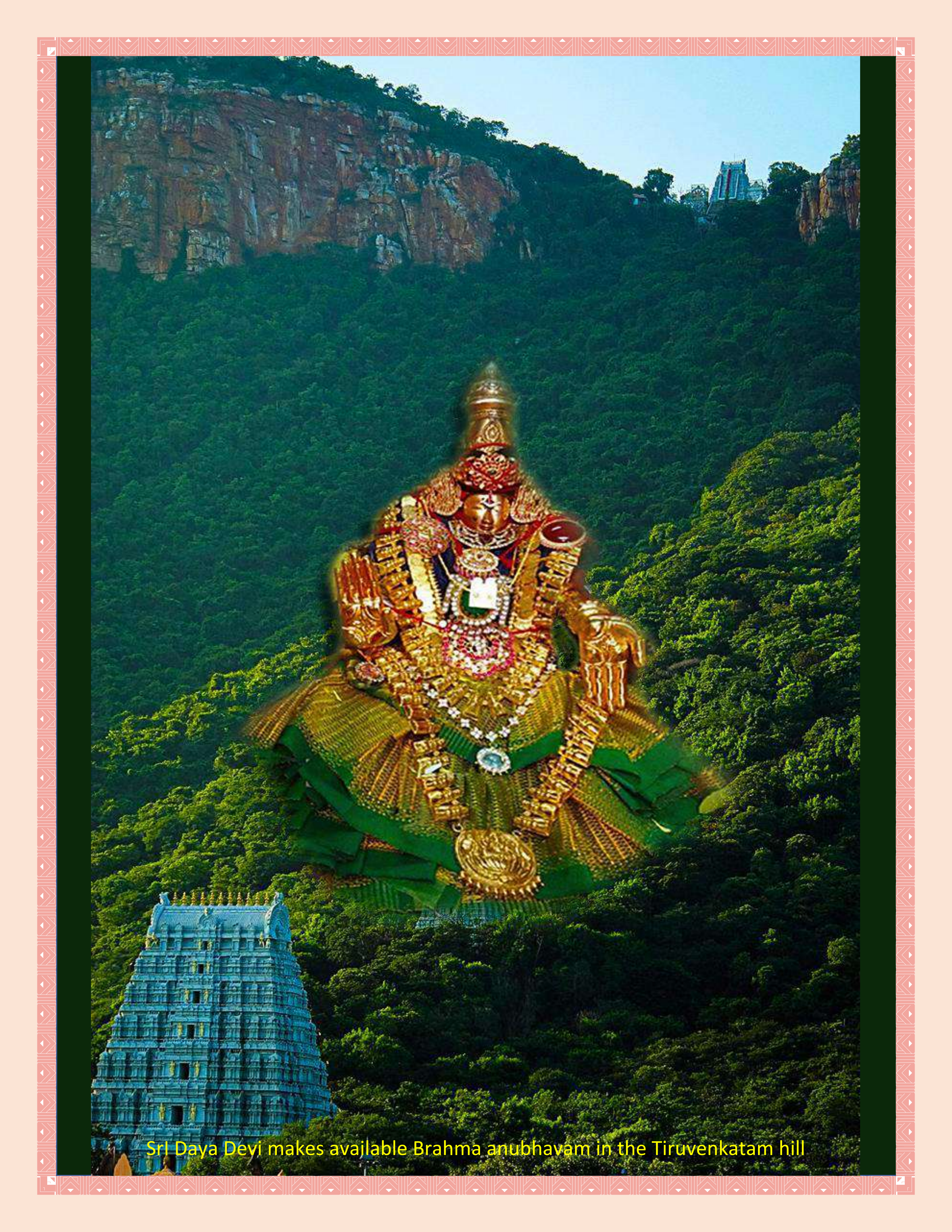
यस्मिन् दृष्टे तदितर सुखैर्गम्यते गोष्पदत्वं
सत्यं ज्ञानं त्रिभिरवधिभिर्मुक्तमानन्द सिन्धुम्।
त्वत्स्वीकारात् तमिह कृतिनः सूरि बृन्दानुभाव्यम्
नित्यापूर्वं निधिमिव दये निर्विशन्त्यञ्जनाद्रौ ॥ ४४ ॥

yasmin dR^iShTe taditara sukhair gamyate goShpadatvaM
satyaM j~nAnaM tribhiravadhibhir muktamAnanda sindhum|
tvat svIkArAt tamiha kR^itinaH sUri bR^indAnu bhAvyam
nityA pUrvaM nidhimiva daye nirvishant ya~njanAdrau|| 44



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The previous verse highlighted the glory of Daya Devi in terms of making available to all the pond of Lord Srinivasa, which is a large repository of clear and cool water, that is welcoming and relieves those who take a dip in these waters from the three kinds of Tapams, in the manner of the coolness getting rid of the scorching heat of the summer. This verse "yasmin dR^iShTe taditara sukhair gamyate goShpadatvaM satyaM j~nAnaM tribhiravadhibhir muktamAnanda sindhum tvat svIkArAt tamiha kR^itinaH sUri bR^indAnu bhAvyam nityA pUrvaM nidhimiva daye nirvishant ya~njanAdrau" is intended to illustrate the fact that the Brahma anubhavam at Tiruvenkatam, that is experienced by those beings bound by karma, is no different from the paripUrNa brahma anubhavam that can be gained in Sri Vaikuntam alone, when one is rid of all karma. One needs to adopt either Bhakti Yogam or resort to SaraNAgati to completely expend one's karma and obtain moksham to beget paripUrNa Bbrahma anubhavam in Sri Vaikuntam. However, the enormity of Daya Devi's anugraham to beings bound by karma becomes evident when She makes available the same Brahma anubhavam to them in the Venkatam hill. The verse commences with the tribute "yasmin dR^iShTe" denoting the fact that those who offer obeisance at the Shrine of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. Here, Svami Desikan provides a direct link to the Mundaka Upanishad salutation "bhidyate hR^idayagranthiH Chidyante sarvasaMshayAH kShIyante cAsya karmANi tasmin dR^iShTe parAvare" (Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.8)



SrI Daya Devi makes available Brahma anubhavam in the Tiruvenkatam hill

While expositing on the Brahma Vidyas for Bhakti Yogis, the Upanishad declares "shrotavyaH dR^iShTavyaH nididhyAsitavyaH mantavyaH" (Brihadaranya Upanishad 2.4.5) namely one must listen to the instruction carefully, one must apply one's mind with concentration, one must perceive the instruction and one must engage in dhyAnam of the instruction pertaining to the Paramatma. dR^iShTe in this context is the darshana samAkAra j~nAnam, namely the knowledge gained by visual perception of the Brahman (Lord Narayana). This is gained by dhyAnam (uninterrupted contemplation of Lord Narayana).



Meditate on SrIman NArAyaNan

The jIvan is bound by the knot (granthi) of rAga and dvesha due to rajo guNam and tamo guNam. However, when the jIvan begets the j~nAnam as outlined in the Upanishad statement, it destroys the rAga and dvesha by severing the knot as alluded to in the salutation "hrudayat granThi". Additionally, by getting this knowledge, all doubts pertaining to the essential nature of the Paramatma, the relationship between the jIvatma and Paramatma are removed once and for all. Furthermore, the statement "kShIyante cAsya karmANi tasmin dR^iShTe parAvare"

declares that the jIvan is rid of all karma. The reference "yasmin dR^iShTe" (namely saluting Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill), in the Daya Satakam verse highlights this important message from the Upanishad. The inner meaning is that a darsanam of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill confers the same benefit as outlined in the Upanishad statement "tasmin dR^iShTe parAvare". Svami Bhashyakarar declares "prApya tR^iShNa" or "prApyeti vaitR^iShNa" to denote the fact that in order to obtain something one needs to develop a desire for attaining the object. Additionally, one needs to develop the perspective that this object is superior to everything else in comparison and hence attaining it must be the singular focus of one's efforts. For example, if one desires to succeed in the IIT entrance exam, one needs to develop an appreciation of the greatness of the institution IIT. Only when both the desire to obtain the object and an appreciation of the elevated nature of the object is present will one succeed in the endeavor to beget the object. In this context, it is important to develop the desire for Bhagavad Anubhavam and the appreciation of the fact that all other worldly and heavenly pleasures are insignificant in comparison. This is highlighted in the Daya Satakam tribute "yasmin dR^iShTe taditara sukhair gamyate goShpadatvaM". In the previous verse, Lord Srinivasa was visualized as a pond belonging to Daya Devi. Here, the dR^iShTAntam (perspective) is further reinforced. For example, when a cow's hooves create a slight depression in the sand where water can collect, it seems like a large body of water to ants and other insects. A bigger opening than this which holds more water seems larger in comparison. However, this pales in comparison to the waters of a pond which in turn seem small when compared to that of a large lake. In a like manner, the enormity of river water like the Ganga river trumps the lake waters. The waters of the ocean similarly exceed the vastness of river water. In another example, a village resident may be mesmerized by the comforts on offer in a city life, while the city resident is enamored by the comforts on offer in a large city and the residents of the large city are wonderstruck by the luxuries afforded in wealthy lands overseas. However, when one begets Bhagavad anubhavam by saluting Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill, the greatest of pleasures that one can imagine becomes like the puddle formed by cow hooves and pales into insignificance. This is described in the salutation "taditara sukhair gamyate goShpadatvaM". However, in the present times, these desires seem to be in reverse, with residents in India thinking of the great comforts on offer overseas, while those residents overseas belonging to our sampradAyam look upon residents in India with envy for the Bhagyam of being able to get nitya darsanam of Lord Narayana." Svamin then narrated a personal instance wherein his revered father purchased a house in

Kanchipuram. The owner who sold the house in Kanchipuram invested the amount from the Kanchipuram home sale in a property in Adayar, Chennai. Many years passed and Svamin remarked to his father. “Look at the investment of the previous owner of this house. Today his property in Chennai is worth several crore rupees. However, our home has not had much of an appreciation. May be it is due to our respective karmas.” Svamin’s father heard this silently. A few days passed. The procession of Varadaraja perumal arrived at their doorstep. Due to a large crowd that had gathered that day Svamin and his revered father were unable to go to the Temple of Lord Varadaraja. Instead, they had the bhAgyam of Perumal granting them sevai at their doorstep. After this darsanam Svamin’s father remarked “You mentioned that the previous owner of this house made a wise investment, which appreciated several fold. However, will that money enable a darsanam of Lord Varadaraja as we enjoyed now?” Thus, the investment of the prior owner became gOShpadam in comparison to the darsanam of Lord Varadaraja.

We now continue with the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: “In a like manner, when compared to the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill, even the status of Chaturmukha Brahma becomes like the puddle of water formed from the cow’s hooves. The majestic Lord Srinivasa is enjoyed by nityasUris in the manner of the Vedam declaration “satyam j~nAnam anantam brahma” It must be borne in mind that bhagavad svarUpam remains unchanged (has no vikAram). This bhagavad svarUpam is in the form of satyam (truth). Next comes j~nAnam, which is “svayam prakasham” (self-illuminating). In order to realize the Lord, no other aid is needed. To identify a lamp, one does not need another light source. In a like manner, no auxiliary light sources are needed to understand Lord Narayana. The bhagavad svarUpam in this instance is self-illuminating as denoted by the tribute “j~nAnam”. anantam is the next attribute. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, this is expounded upon as “tribhiravadhibhiH”, “desha kAla vastu pariChedha rahitam”. desha denotes the fact that Lord Narayana is omnipresent. His presence is not restricted to one place. He is present everywhere without exception. In a like manner with respect to kAlam or time, Lord Narayana is present at all times. His presence is not limited to certain times. vastu is the next thing that is elucidated upon in this salutation. That is the Lord is present in all objects without distinction or exception. For example, one cannot declare “ayam ghaTaH na paramAtmA na Brahma” (I am a pot, not Brahman or Paramatma). The Lord exists as the ocean of joy in the manner of the Upanishad statement “Anando brahmeti vyajAnAt” (Taitriya Upanishad). This Lord Narayana is enjoyed by nityasUris, who are eternal residents of Sri Vaikuntam.



Anando brahmeti vyajAnAt

"tamiha tvat svIkArAt kR^itinaH" is the next salutation from the Daya Satakam verse denoting the fact that beings that are bound to their earthly existence on account of Karma, who seek refuge in Daya Devi, are able to enjoy the Supreme Lord Srinivasa much in the same manner as the nityasUris in Sri Vaikuntam. This comes about due to Daya Devi interceding on their behalf and recommending to the Lord "These beings belong to Me. Please enable them to enjoy You in the same manner as the nityasUris do in Sri Vaikuntam". Thereby these beings are granted "special entry" to enjoy Lord Srinivasa. The salutation "kR^itinaH" in this verse refers to those who have performed SaraNAgati to Lord Srinivasa or more precisely sought refuge in Daya Devi through SaraNAgati to Her. These are the fortunate beings granted special entry to enjoy Lord Srinivasa in the manner described herein. Svami Desikan declares "asmad deshika sampradAya rahitaiH adyApi nA lakShitaH" referring to the fact that this sampradayam that has embraced the doctrine of unconditional total surrender to Lord Narayana and has been handed down by learned seers (Acharyas) has still not been accepted by a large majority of people. One could go a step further and use this statement as a description of those in the sampradayam of Svami Desikan, who have not performed SaraNAgati, as being ignorant of the nuances of the sampradayam, while those in the tradition of Svami Desikan, who have performed SaraNAgati, are the truly blessed ones. These fortunate ones are embraced by Daya Devi in the manner of "tvat svIkArAt tamiha kR^itinaH sUri bR^indAnu bhAvyam" to grant them the anubhavam that is meant for nityasUris in Sri Vaikuntam. Svami NammAzhvar declares "ariyA kAlattuLLE aDimaikaN anbu ceivittu aRiyA mAmayattu aDiyEnai vaittAyAl aRiyAmai kuraLAi nilam mAvali mUvaDi enRu aRiyAmai vancittAi enatAviyuL kalantE" The import ot this tribute is "We are living in aj~nAnam. We do not have the requisite knowledge to enjoy paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. We are very much subject to the bonds of karma. If You bestow upon me, who is in this plight, the knowledge that I belong to You and that You are my Master, there can be no greater blessing. This would be my bhagyam (good fortune)." The tribute "sUri bR^indAnu bhAvyam" from this Daya Satakam verse mirrors the tribute of Svami NammAzhvar's TiruvAimozhi "kaLippum kavarvum aRRu piRappu piNi mUppu iRapaRRu oLikoNDa cotiyumAi". "kaLippu" denotes the joy at begetting what one is longing for, while "kavarvum" denotes the sorrow due to disappointment of not getting what one is longing for. "piRappu piNi mUppu" denotes the cycle of birth and death. "Freed from this cycle, I long for the time when I can enjoy Your splendorous form in the same manner as the nityasUris in Sri Vaikuntam" is the import of the Azhvar's tribute.



Seek refuge in Her through SaraNAgati

This outpouring of the Azhvar longing for the enjoyment of the Lord is readily made available on this earth by Daya Devi to those who have sought refuge in Her through SaraNAgati. In the Varadaraja Panchasat verse "tvam cet prasIdasi tavAsmi samIpatascet tvayyasti bhaktiranaghA karishailanAtha samsR^ijyate yadi ca dAsajanastvadIyaH samsara eSha bhagavannapavarga eva" Svami Desikan declares that "begetting Your grace, developing blemishless love for You, being assured of a place near You, and getting the bhagyam of kaimkaryam for You along with other bhagavatas, there can be nothing greater." Even in Sri Vaikuntam there is nothing greater on offer. This is the anubhavam that one gets in Sri Vaikuntam. In a like manner, in the context of the Daya Satakam verse, the fortunate beings, "kR^itinaH", beget a state in their earthly existence itself of enjoying Lord Srinivasa identical to that of NityasUris enjoying the Lord in Sri Vaikuntam due to securing the grace of Daya Devi.

The final part of this verse "nityA pUrvaM nidhimiva daye nirvishant ya~njanAdrau" highlights those who beget this anubhavam. "jAnmAntara sahasreShu tapo dhyAna samAdibhiH narANAm kShINa pApAnAm kR^iShNe bhaktiH prajAyate" is the tribute that describes one who begets Krishna bhakti. This comes about on account of innumerable births, wherein one is engaged in rigorous tapas and dhyAnam. Svami Desikan alludes to our condition in this Daya Satakam tribute. Specifically, we do not know what caused us to get this birth. If we are the receptacles of Daya Devi's grace, we get the elevated Krishna Bhakti, which takes aeons to develop. This enables us to enjoy Lord Srinivasa even in one's earthly existence in the same manner as the nitysUris of Sri Vaikuntam. The tribute "nidhimiva" in this Daya Satakam verse, refers to the upanishadic passage that describes the fact that in a house there exists a rare treasure. However, oblivious of this fact, residents of the house walk over it with total disregard. In a like manner, we too are oblivious to the presence of Lord Srinivasa standing on top of the Venkatam hill.

However, the Anjana giri (the hill of Anjana) offers the perfect collyrium for our eyes to behold the Lord Srinivasa and enjoy Him in the same way as the nityasUris in Sri Vaikuntam, thus highlighting the importance of bhagavad anubhavam. This made available for those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi through SaraNAgati. Again, no doubt the benefit conferred by Daya Devi is lofty. A simple mechanism for begetting this is by seeking refuge at the feet of Svami Desikan and developing pratibhakti for Svami Desikan. Those possessed of this are the "kR^itinaH" described in the Daya Satakam verse. Let alone gaining the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. The mere thought of this

anubhavam through the enjoyment of the Daya Satakam is indeed the major anugraham conferred by Svami Desikan. Thus, by seeking refuge in Svami Desikan's Feet one can gain the elevated anugraham of Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "The perception and comprehension of the Divine nature (svarUpa) of the Lord - which is pure Satyam, j~nAnam, and Boundlessness - is itself a great ocean of bliss, compared to which all pleasures of this world would look miniature cow-hoof-size puddle of stagnant water. Oh Daya Devi! Gifted and fortunate people are enabled by sheer impact of Your granting assent "So be it" to enjoy the bliss of the unfathomable ocean of Bliss in AnjanAdri (Tirumalai Hill), which bliss is ever anew, which is the subject of enjoyment of Nityas and Muktas in groups and assemblies, eternally too. They used to say that one could discover an underground treasure by the application of collyrium. These fortunate souls were enabled to see the Lord's AtmasvarUpa in AnjanAdri. Without anjana-application! By sheer dint of Your will that it shall be so!"



Slokam 45

सारं लब्ध्वा कमपि महतः श्रीनिवासाम्बुराशेः

काले काले घनरसवती काळिकेवानुकम्पे ।

व्यक्तोन्मेषा मृगपति गिरौ विश्वमाप्याययन्ती

शीलोपज्ञं क्षरति भवती शीतलं सद्गुणौघम् ॥ ४५ ॥

sAraM labdhvA kamapi mahataH shrInivAsAmburAsheH

kAle kAle ghana rasavatI kAlikevAnukampe|

vyakton meShA mR^igapati girau vishvam ApyAyayantI

shIlopaj~naM kSharati bhavatI shItalaM sadguNaugham||45



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

" We now come to verse 45. In the previous verse the greatest of pleasures compared to the Daya Devi-orchestrated Bhagavad anubhavam of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill pales into insignificance in the manner of a water puddle formed from miniature cow hooves and that the anubhavam of Lord Srinivasa made available to ordinary jIvans (due to Daya Devi declaring that "this jIvan belongs to Me") is identical to the paripUrNa brahma anubhavam enjoyed by nityasUris in Sri Vaikuntam. Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis are of exceptionally high quality in that even when an athisayam or visesham is highlighted it is always in conformance with the Sastram. In the Ramayanam, King Trishanku desired to go to svarga lokam in his human form. Therefore, he submitted an appeal to his guru Vasishta and his sons to perform a yajna to aid in this task. Vasishta cautioned him by mentioning that this desire to reach Svargam in human form is inappropriate since it violates the important Sastraic command of giving up one's human form to acquire a body suitable for residence in Svargam. Vasishta further exposited that the Atma is eternal. It is capable of remembering all the anubhavams in the current body and the experiences it encounters in the next janma. However, the experience from one birth to the other necessarily requires giving up residence in a body from the previous birth. Therefore, Trishanku's desire to reach Svarga lokam in human form is in violation of this sastraic prescription. However, Trishanku was adamant in his desire to experience Svarga lokam in his human form. For this purpose, he

approached Visvamitra and performed Saranagati. Visvamitra out of his promise to Trishanku undertook great pains to perform a yajnam for this purpose. Trishanku proceeded to Svargam but was denied entry by Indra and pushed out. While his desire to reach Svargam in human form was in violation of Sastram, it is absolutely in conformance with the Sastram to desire the anubhavam of Svarga lokam on this earth itself. Had Trishanku desired this he could have even realized this wish. However, neither did Trishanku desire this anubhavam nor did he get it. In contrast Svami Desikan fully well recognizes that the paripUrNa brahma anubhavam is possible only in Sri Vaikuntam, which one can reach only upon attaining a zero balance of karma, as a consequence of which one begets Moksham. In this process, the jIvan performs VirajA nadi snAnam and begets an aprAkruta sharIram (a body that is free from prakruti sambandham) prior to entering Sri Vaikuntam. However, the desire to have the same brahma anubhavam as that experienced in Sri Vaikuntam in this earthly existence is perfectly valid and attainable. Most importantly it is in conformance with the Sastras. Svami Desikan notes that this benefit is possible entirely due to the intervention of Daya Devi, who declares "he belongs to Me". In this instance, Daya Devi functions as an Acharyan, who intercedes on behalf of the jIvan and requests the Lord to grant paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. During the performance of Bharanyasam, Acharyas recite by way of sankalpam "madIya tvenabhimatasya asya chetanasya" which explicitly requests the Lord's grace on the individual since "He belongs to me (the Acharyan)". Once this declaration comes forth from the Acharyan, the Lord is moved and at once showers His mercy. Therefore, it is sufficient to hear this declaration from the Acharya since the Lord's grace is bound to follow. Svami Alavandar in his Sri Sukti Stotra Ratnam declares:

dhigashucimavinItaM nirdayaM mamalajjam

paramapuruSha yo (a)haM yogivaryAgragaNyaIH

vidhishivasanakAdyaIrdhyAtumatyanta dUram

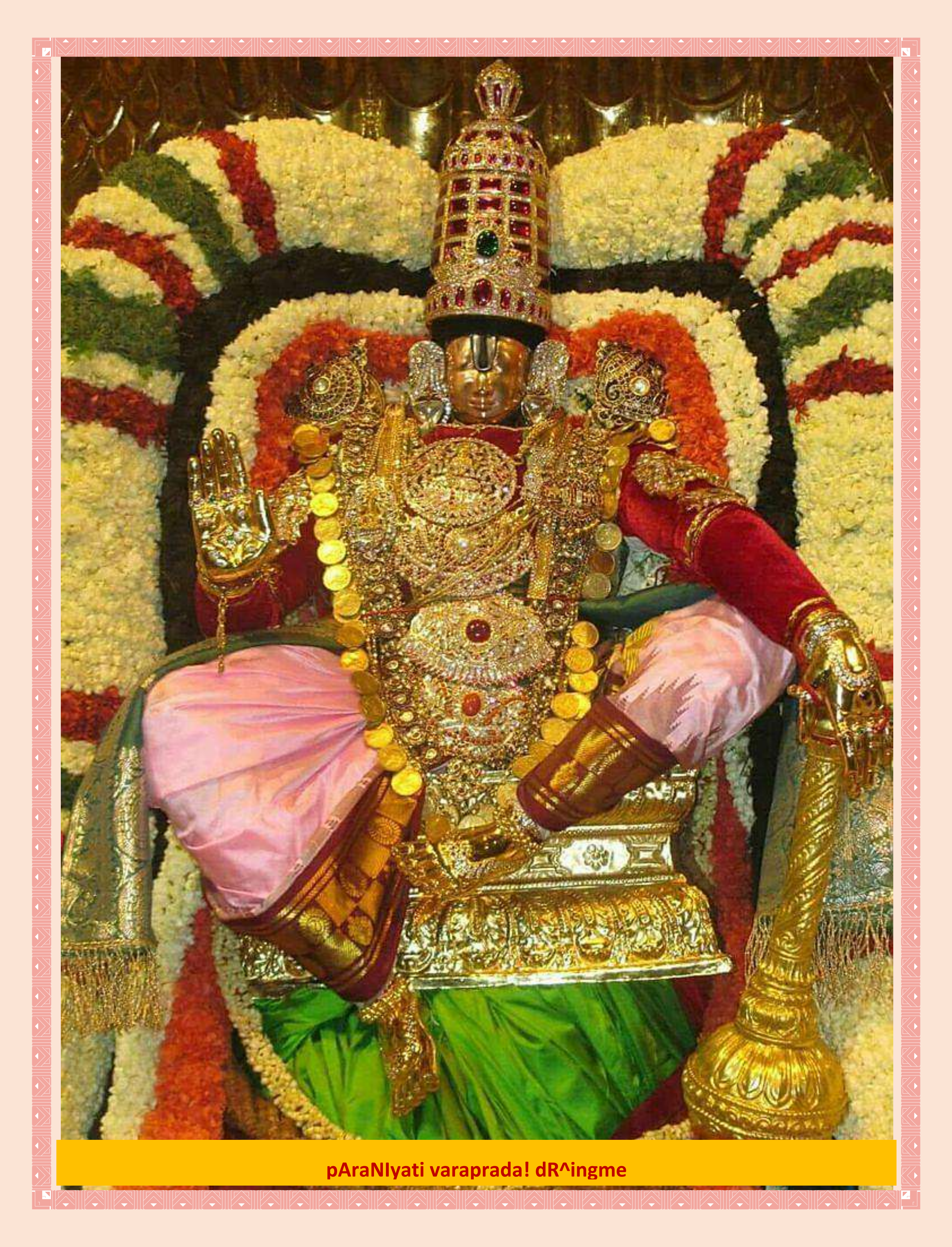
tava parijana bhAvaM kAmaye kAmavR^ittaH"

to reflect his naichyam (intense self-deprecation). The import of this declaration is that "I am the lowest of the low. I have no humility. I am bereft of any mercy. One would normally be ashamed of this state. However, I have no sense of shame either due to this state. Nevertheless, I shamelessly admit to the desire of Kaimkaryam to Your feet, which is not obtained even by elevated personages like Brahma and Rudra. You must grace me with this bhagyam." Beholding the Lord's silence to his appeal Svami Alavandar was puzzled. He then realized that since the

disqualifications for the Lord's grace had been laid bare, the Lord was urging him to get rid of them to become privy to the Lord's grace. Svami Alavandar continues that he has a major qualification. "pitAmahaM nAthamuniM vilokya prasIda madvR^ittamacintayitvA". The import of this declaration is that due to the fact that I belong to Svami Nathamuni (Acharya sambandham), there is no way You can exclude me." Therefore, it is established beyond doubt that when one begets Acharya anugraham through the statement "he belongs to me" the grace of Lord Narayana is bound to follow. In this verse Svami Desikan expounds on the compassion of Daya Devi for all beings without distinction of whether they belong to Her or not. This verse "sAraM labdhvA kamapi mahataH shrInivAsAmburAsheH kAle kAle ghana rasavatI kAlikevAnukampe vyakton meShA mR^igapati girau vishvam ApyAyayantI shIlopaj~naM kSharati bhavatI shItalaM sadguNaugham" is examined now. Here Lord Srinivasa is likened to an ocean and Daya Devi is described in terms of a cloud. The cloud absorbs the ocean water and distributes this through rain. It must be observed that the cloud has absolute freedom to determine where the rainfall occurs. However, the cloud cannot command an ocean to produce rain in a given place. The inner meaning of this verse is that Lord Srinivasa is the ocean whose waters are made up of the Lord's Kalyana gunams. These waters are absorbed by the cloud known as Daya Devi and distributed through copious rainfall. This rainfall is meant for all without distinction of any kind. The sambodhanam here is anukampe. "anukampe mahataH shrInivAsAmburAsheH is the tribute reflecting the fact that Lord Srinivasa is an ocean. In some commentaries it can be seen that sagarantam iva puttam. This refers to the sons of King Sagara (one of the ancestors of Lord Rama) who created a miniature body of water known as sAgara. However, in this instance Svami Desikan glorifies the ocean of Lord Srinivasa as "mahataH" namely as a limitless ocean. This is due to the fact that the Vedam glorifies Lord Narayana as "satyam j~nAnam anantam brahma". It is helpful to understand the import of the Vedam declaration from the exposition of the previous verse, which is reproduced here. It must be borne in mind that bhagavad svarUpam remains unchanged (has no vikAram). bhagavad svarUpam is in the form of satyam (truth). Next comes j~nAnam, which is "svayam prakAsham" (self-illuminating). In order to realize the Lord, no other aid is needed. To identify a lamp, one does not need another light source. In a like manner, no auxiliary light sources are needed to understand Lord Narayana. The bhagavad svarUpam in this instance is self-illuminating as denoted by the tribute j~nAnam. anantam is the next attribute. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, this is expounded upon as "tribhiravadibhiH" "desha kAla vastu paricCeda rahitam" desha denotes the fact

that Lord Narayana is omnipresent. His presence is not restricted to one place. He is present everywhere without exception. In a like manner with respect to kAlam or time, Lord Narayana is present at all times. His presence is not limited to certain times. vastu is the next thing that is elucidated upon in this salutation. That is the Lord is present in all objects without distinction or exception. For example one cannot declare "ayam ghaTaH na paramAtma na brahma" (I am a pot not Brahman or Paramatma). This verse of the Daya Satakam makes an eloquent case for the limitless ocean of mercy known as Lord Srinivasa. The commonly known ocean has breadth and depth which can be measured and is finite even if it is large. The clouds that absorb the salty waters of this ocean and disperse this as rain offer soothing comfort and relief to all beings. What then to speak of an infinite ocean of bliss, which is replete with the waters of the Lord's Kalyana gunams, that is converted into copious rainfall by the cloud known as Daya Devi? The commonly known salty ocean water may contain gems in its depth. However, superficially, it is filled with alligators, whales, and sharks that are harmful creatures. Therefore, these waters contain an offering that is a combination of good and bad things. However, in contrast, the ocean known as Lord Srinivasa is replete with numerous auspicious qualities and is therefore an offering of blissful enjoyment. Here, "heya pratyanIka kalyANaguNaIkatAnatvam" is the description of the Lord. To enjoy the anubhavam of Lord Narayana, it is necessary to resort to the Sri Suktis of Sri Bhashyakarar, Svami Desikan, and Azhvars. Only with these can bhagavad anubhavam be completely enjoyed. One may wonder that when one is immersed in Azhvar Sri Suktis, what is the need for Bhashyakara Sri Suktis. The Azhvar's Sri Suktis are replete with Bhakti, Vedanta arthams (meanings). It is to appreciate the latter, the need for Sri Bhashyakarar's Sri Suktis becomes apparent. Unless one undertakes a kalakshepam of Sri Bhashyakarar's Sri Suktis, it is impossible to appreciate the subtle and nuanced meanings of the Azhvar outpourings containing capsules of profound Vedantic wisdom. Svami Desikan goes a step further by condensing in his Sri Suktis the essence of the Azhvar outpourings as well as the insights from Sri Bhashyakarar's Sri Suktis. Specifically, the ubhayalinga padam pertaining to Sri Bhashyakarar's Sri Suktis expounds upon the "heya pratyanIka kalyANaguNaIkatAnatvam" of Lord Narayana. This is explicitly contained in Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis too. heya guNam denotes everything that is bad. The Lord is one who is the exact opposite in that He is replete with innumerable auspicious qualities, completely bereft of the heya guNam. The Vedam exposits on the essential nature of Brahman. If one were to examine the Vedam tribute it is the statement "heya pratyanIka kalyANaguNaIkatAnatvam" namely, Brahman is

replete with innumerable auspicious attributes. Sri Bhashyakarar further expounds upon Brahman in the Sri Bhashyam opening verse through the tribute "brahmaNi shrinivAse", namely that Brahman is none other than Lord Srinivasa. Thus it becomes apparent that this ocean of Lord Srinivasa is replete with numerous auspicious qualities and is totally bereft of any of the bad qualities (described in terms of whales, sharks and the like) that can be found in the commonly known ocean consisting of salty water. Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse alludes to this quality of the ocean known as Lord Srinivasa through the tribute "sAraM labdhvA kamapi mahataH shrInivAsAmburAsheH". sAram as it pertains to the salty ocean waters is only the water component bereft of salt. It is well known that clouds absorb the water from the ocean, while discarding the salt. The salt is known as asAram and hence is discarded in favor of the sAram. However, when one examines the ocean of Lord Srinivasa, He is completely free from heya guNam. Therefore, what can be the asAram in this case? It must be borne in mind that the Lord is greatly angered by baddha jIvans who act in a manner totally contrary to the Lord's commands, namely the Sastras, and thus incur His displeasure resulting in His nigraha (punishment) sankalpam. daNDadaratvam is the specific guNam of Lord Srinivasa, which results in punishment being meted out to baddha jIvans in accordance with their karma. This is deemed to be the asAram according to Svami Desikan. The gentle cloud of Daya Devi in this instance skillfully discards this asAram and only pours out as copious rainfall the auspicious qualities of Lord Srinivasa, the most prominent among them being saushIlyam, saulabhyam, and vatsalyam reflecting the best of the best in terms of the Lord's auspicious qualities. There are two types of clouds, the white fair weather clouds and the dark rain-bearing clouds. The salutation "ghanarasavatI" from this verse reflects the fact that Daya Devi has extracted the sAram in the form of the above mentioned kalyANa guNams of the Lord and is waiting for the opportunity to burst forth and distribute these soothing waters to thirsty beings. Normally, a cloud that bears the rasam of water from the salty ocean in described as a visheSham in the form of ghanarasam. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the reference to rasam is the Vedam description of Lord Srinivasa in the statement raso vai saH rasa hyevayam labdhvAnandi bhavati. This is a description of Lord Srinivasa as the rasam. The moment one beholds the glorious form of Lord Srinivasa, one's eyes, ears, and mouth begin to water partaking of this joyous bhagavad anubhavam. This is reflective of Sri Kuresa's tribute in SrI Varadaraja stavam pAraNIyati varaprada! dR^ingme wherein he declares that he would like to verily devour the Lord with his eyes. The pramanam for this comes from Svami NammAzhvar's declaration that it is commonly


pAraNIyati varaprada! dR^ingme

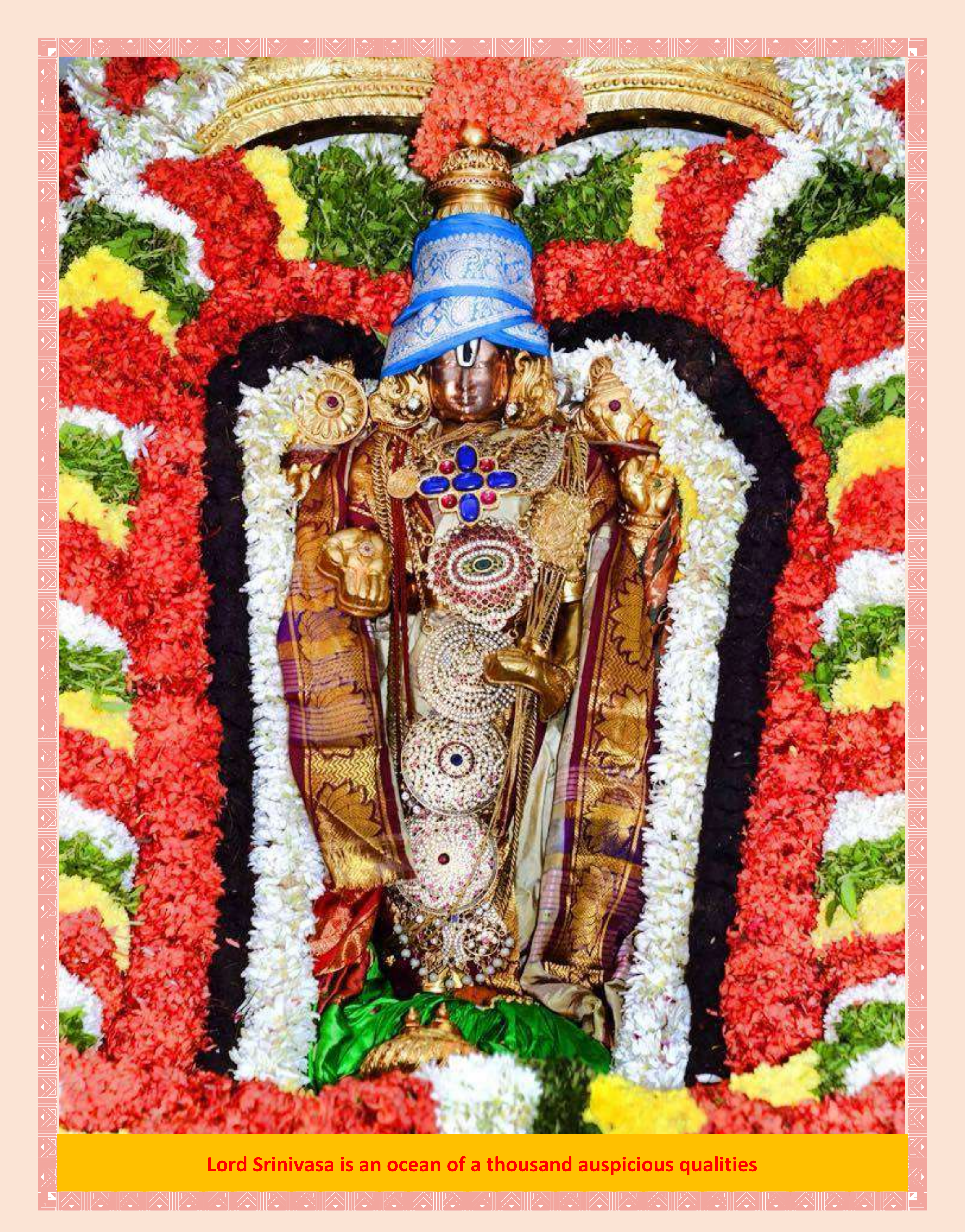
understood that the eyes are meant for visual perception, while the ears are meant for hearing, while the tongue is meant for tasting. However, when it comes to Bhagavad anubhavam no such restrictions apply. Any sense organ can perform any function. The tribute of Sri Kuresa is best understood through the analogy of a man, who has remained on nirjalam (not even partaking of water) fasting on ekadasi and Sravana dvadasi days, taking to pAraNai (partaking of food) on the next day with great relish for the food on offer. In a like manner, Sri Kuresa seeks to devour the beauty of the Lord with his eyes. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, it is this rasam of Bhagavad anubhavam (raso vai saha) that is captured by the cloud known as Daya Devi and distributed as copious rainfall containing the primary kalyaNa guNams of saushIlyam, saulabhyam, and vAtsalyam. There is an important difference between the cloud known as Daya Devi and ordinary clouds. The latter is merely water-bearing. However, the former has under Her command, the Supreme Lord Srinivasa. This is another reason for the usage "ghanarasavati". One more interpretation of "ghanarasavati" comes about from the fact that Daya Devi exudes affection for all beings in the hope that they seek refuge at Her Feet and beget the grace of Lord Srinivasa. An ordinary rain-bearing cloud is dark in color. So too is Lord Srinivasa, who is glorified as "nIameghashyAma" by way of Azhvar mangalasasanam. For example the tribute from Svami NammAzhvar for Lord Srinivasa glorifies him as "minnumAmazhai tavazhum mEka vaNNa itu vaNNamaruLgal aNimEka vaNNa". There is also the tribute from Sri Tirumangai Azhvar in a similar vein. TiruppAnAzhvar submits his eulogy as "koNDal vaNNanai kovalanAi veNNaiyuNDavAyan". The Tiruppavai tribute from Sri Andal "Uzhimutalvan uruvam pOl meikaruttu" reflects the same glorification. These tributes identify a commonality between Lord Srinivasa and the rain-bearing cloud. In a prior verse the characteristics of upamAnam and upameyam were highlighted, with the latter attaining distinction due to the former. On the other hand, if the Lord were to be described in terms of a dark rain-bearing cloud, it brings no greatness to the Lord. Therefore, Andal instead refers to the cloud and declares that the cloud must acquire the color resembling the dark-hued body of the Lord. This needs to be understood from the fact that the Lord's aprAkR^ita (no contact with PrakR^iti) divyamangala vigraham is pristinely pure and its beauty defies description. Therefore, the cloud cannot even be equated in any manner with the beautiful form of the Lord. The tribute "mR^igapati girau vyakton meShA" from this Daya Satakam verse attests to the fact that this cloud known as Daya Devi has taken root at the Simhachalam hill. This is one of the seven hills in the formation Seshachala, Garudachala, Vrushabhachala, Narayanachala, Anjanachala,



The Daya Devi cloud offers the rasam of Bhagavad anubhavam, for the upliftment of all jIvans

Simhachala, and Venkatachala. The import of this tribute is that Daya Devi is prominently seen at the Simhachala hill. The inner meaning of the tribute is that the rain-bearing cloud known as Daya Devi is capable of granting all Purusharthas. This can be seen from a distance. This rain-bearing cloud is capable of granting anything that one wishes for in terms of Ayush, Arogyam, Aishvaryam, Kaivalyam, Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, and Moksham. The Daya Devi cloud seems to instruct us in the message "Behold the Lord, who is under My command!" There are three kinds of rain that occur. One that provides welcome relief from the scorching heat of the summer. This is welcomed with great joy by all beings. The second type of rain is torrential, wreaking great havoc and destruction in its wake. Everyone looks forward to the end of this type of rain. In fact, this type of rain is detested. The third type of rain is that which arrives at the appropriate time in just the right amount, which facilitates the growth of crops, grains, and medicinal herbs. In this context a Veda mantram rendition along with a brief explanation by Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramanuja Tatacharya Svamin is included in the link [Veda mantra]. This rainfall is celebrated by all. The tribute "kAlikevAnukampe vyakton meShA mR^igapati girau vishvam ApyAyayantI" in this Daya Satakam verse glorifies the rain-bearing cloud of Daya Devi as one that grants the wishes of all Her seekers and is therefore celebrated like the third type of rainfall described herein. Svami Desikan's anubhavam of Daya Devi as a rain-bearing cloud affords an interesting comparison with commonly seen clouds. The commonly seen rain-bearing cloud brings relief from the scorching heat of the sun, while the Daya Devi cloud brings relief from the unbearable heat of samsAram (refer to the narrative of verses 38 and 43 for more detail). The enormous act of the Daya Devi cloud is captured in the statement "duShkarmasparsha vipAka virodhanam" Namely, what we endure in this life is a result of accumulated Karma (good and bad). If one gets an opportunity to visit the Venkatam hill and gain a darshanam of Lord Srinivasa, it is entirely due to some previous punyam bearing fruit. On the other hand, if one begets something undesirable or encounters significant troubles, it is the result of some prior papa karma. The enormous anugraham rendered by the Daya Devi cloud is that She ensures that only the good prior karma yields fruit and that the prior bad karma never gets to prevail for an individual. In the process, She relieves all beings of the scorching heat arising from prior sins committed by the jIvan. This is described in terms of the rainfall arising from the Daya Devi cloud, which yields copious showers of Lord Srinivasa's primary kalyANa guNams of saushIlyam, saulabhyam and vAtsalyam. This rainfall extinguishes the heat of any papa karma accrued by the jIvan. The Daya Devi cloud is also the welcoming shade, which offers relief to

suffering jIvans scorched by the tApam (troubles) arising from samsAram. Water is the critical life support for all jIvans. This is offered by the common rain-bearing cloud. The Daya Devi cloud offers the rasam of Bhagavad anubhavam, for the upliftment of all jIvans. The common rain-bearing cloud offers waters to quench one's thirst, while the Daya Devi cloud offers the elixir of the Upanishad statement "apahatapApma vijaraH vishoka vimR^ityuH vijighatsaH apipAsAH satyakAma satya sankalpa esha Atma" which renders thirst permanently a non-issue for the jIvan. Namely, by making the jIvan adopt Saranagati the Daya Devi cloud rids the jIvan of all sins and ensures that the jIvan begets the elevated state of permanent residence in Sri Vaikuntam, where one is bereft of the pangs of hunger, thirst, old age, death, unaffected by sins, always wills the truth, loves the truth and is of the nature of the Atma. Then we focus on the tribute "kAle kAle ghana rasavatI kAlikevAnukampe". The thunderous roar accompanying this rain-bearing cloud is welcomed with joy by all jIvans. The reference here is to the sound of Govinda Govinda permeating the entire area of the Venkatam hill, where the Daya Devi cloud has taken residence. Next, the tribute "shIlopaj~naM kSharati bhavatI shItalaM sadguNaugham" reflects the fact that the inherent nature of Daya Devi and the salient gunams of Lord Srinivasa outlined here is one of ensuring the well-being (yogakShemam) of all jIvans through their upliftment. In this instance, Svami Desikan glorifies Daya Devi as the rain-bearing cloud that liberally distributes these gunams by way of copious showers bringing forth great joy all around. Andal expresses Her preference for the cloud in Her Tiruvenkatam pasurams. In fact She expresses envy for the cloud. Not only the cloud but also all those who render antaranga kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa are objects of envy for Andal. This is not to be interpreted as a stigma for Andal but a depiction of Her anubhavam as an ordinary lady, who is subject to common human emotions. Andal describes the clouds with reference to the Lord of Seven Hills as "oLivaNNam vaLai cintai uRakkathODu ivai ellAm eLimaiyAl iTTennai IDazhiya poyinvAl kuLir aruvi vEnkaTattu en govintan guNam pADi aLiyatta mekangAL AvikattiruppEnE" Andal describes Her state as one of paleness. She has lost Her lustre due to forsaking sleep, food and the like due to the fact that She is engaged in constant contemplation of Lord Srinivasa. However, since Lord Srinivasa has not heeded Her appeal and blessed Her with pratyakSha darshanam, Andal claims to have lost Her luster. She describes Her body as becoming pale, and as a consequence Her bangle is not in the appropriate place, though Her thoughts are always about Lord Srinivasa and in this process She has forsaken sleep. In contrast, She speaks with great envy of the clouds hanging over the Venkatam hill as those engaged in singing the glories of My Lord Govinda (Srinivasa). The reverberation of



Lord Srinivasa is an ocean of a thousand auspicious qualities

the Govinda nAmam according to Andal causes "matayAnai pol ezhunta mA mukilgAL venkaDattai paDiyAka vAzhvIrgAL pambaNaiyan vArttai enne kaDi enRum tAn AvAn karutAtu Or peN koDiyai vatai seitAn ennum sol vaiyyakattAr matiyArE" The clouds are described as being hefty like the mata yAnai or elephant in a rut. This is a direct reference to the "ghanarasavati" tribute of this verse. The reason for this is the fact that those clouds are engaged in the garjanam or roar of the Govinda nAmam. Andal requests the cloud to do Her a favor. Please submit the following appeal to Lord Srinivasa. "My suffering from lack of Your grace is inconsequential. However, I definitely do not want You to get a bad name for not coming to the rescue of one who has sought You and forsaking her. Please safeguard Your reputation." This is a tribute by Andal to the cloud known as Daya Devi, that is ever present at the Venkatam hill and is never separated from Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, Andal submits Her appeal in this context to the Daya Devi cloud. This anubhavam is captured by Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse. In summary, the Daya Devi cloud absorbs the water from the ocean known as Lord Srinivasa and distributes the salient kalyaNa guNams of saushIlyam, saulabhyam, and vAtsalyam in the form of copious rainfall for all beings without distinction of "whether they belong to Her or not"."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"This verse is a metaphorization of Daya Guna as a cloud, cool to all beings irrespective of their nature. The Lord Srinivasa is an ocean-being a conglomerate of a thousand qualities. Which of them is cool, which useful, and which is comfort-conferring, that is Daya.

A figurative presentation of Kavi-tAarkika-simham is captured here. Oh Daya Devi! From the vast-rich ocean of many qualities that Lord Srinivasa is, You squeeze, draw, selectively so, the cool water of love, fondness, and condescending coolness, and shower at all places, high or low, on hills and forests, populated by lions and the like, in a timely phase, raining when it is needed, showering much needed kindness and sympathy, tinged by saushIlya guNa. Lord Srinivasa is equal and common to all. He does not discriminate on any grounds; Daya Devi too is similarly universal."



Slokam 46

भीमे नित्यं भव जलनिधौ मज्जतां मानवानाम्

आलम्बार्थं वृषगिरि पतिस्त्वन्निदेशात् प्रयुङ्क्ते ।

प्रज्ञासारं प्रकृति महता मूल भागेन जुष्टं

शाखा भेदैः सुभगमनघं शाश्वतं शास्त्र पाणिम् ॥ ४६ ॥

bhIme nityaM bhava jalanidhau majjatAM mAnavAnAm

AlambArthaM vR^iShagiripatistvannideshAt prayu~Nkte|

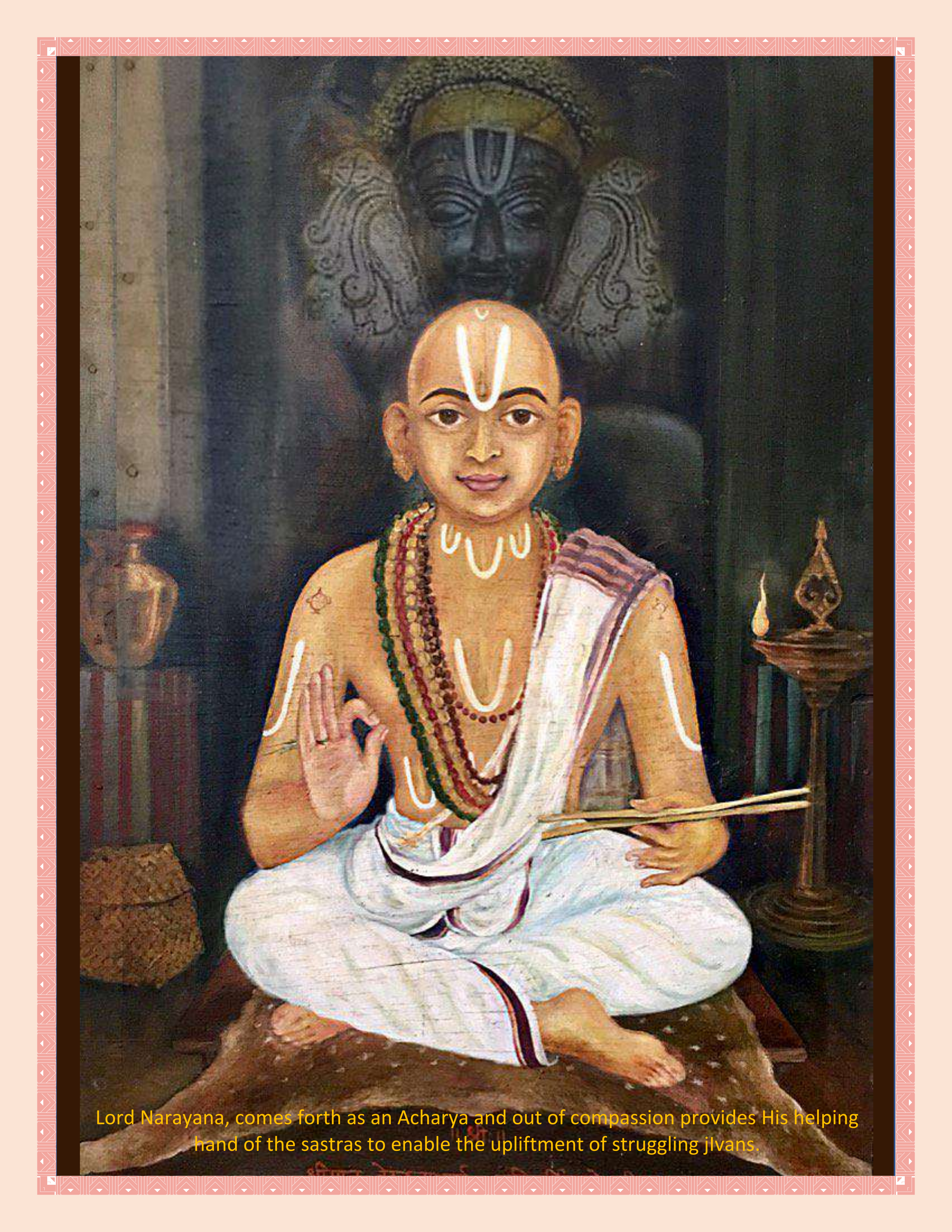
praj~nA sAraM prakR^iti mahatA mUla bhAgena juShTaM

shAkhA bhedaiH subhagamanaghaM shAshvataM shAstrapANim||46



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"In the previous verse, Daya Devi was described as the rain bearing cloud that absorbs the water from the ocean known as Lord Srinivasa and graces all with the shower of rainfall in the form of the Lord's KalyaNa gunams of saushilyam, saulabhyam, and vatsalyam. In this verse Svami Desikan describes the help rendered by Daya Devi to baddha jivans struggling to tide over the samsaric ocean. This is contained in the tribute "bhIme nityaM bhava jalanidhau majjatAM mAnavAnAm AlambArthaM vR^iShagiripatistvannideshAt prayu~Nkte praj~nA sAraM prakR^iti mahatA mUla bhAgena juShTaM shAkhA bhedaiH subhagamanaghaM shAshvataM shAstrapANim". In this instance sastram is depicted as one of the hands of Lord Srinivasa. In this case just as a commoner lends a helping hand to one in distress, Lord Srinivasa lends His hand of the sastram to struggling baddha jivans. In the 18th verse, Svami Desikan has described the elevated role of the sastras through the tribute "shAstramayena sthira pradIpena". The import of this glorification is reproduced for the purposes of a self-contained narrative. The import is "baddha jIvans are struggling greatly due to being enveloped by the darkness of ignorance. The sastrams banish this darkness and thus rid the jivans of their suffering. The sastras offer undying light, which rids the jivans of their nescience induced darkness. This is an enormous help rendered by Daya Devi. In this verse, Svami Desikan expounds on the help rendered by the Lord at the behest of Daya Devi to baddha jivans, who are struggling to navigate the



Lord Narayana, comes forth as an Acharya and out of compassion provides His helping hand of the sastras to enable the upliftment of struggling jIvans.

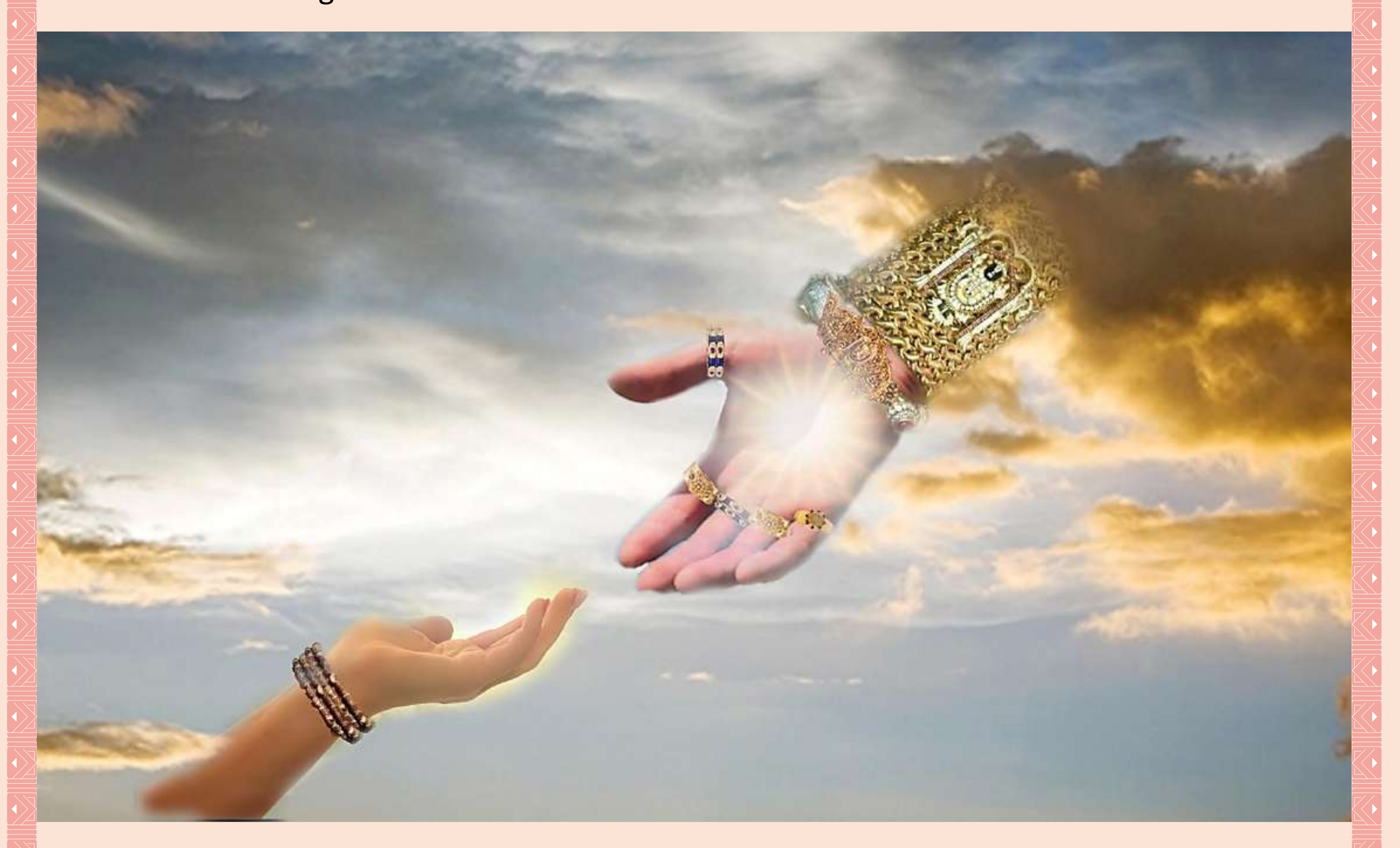
ocean of Samsara and are being tossed hither and tither. Specifically, the Lord lends His helping hand of Sastras for the upliftment of these jivans. It may be asked that since Svami Desikan has already exposited on the elevated nature of the sastras, and that it is not considered good poetic practice to repeat a previously discussed theme, why is he bringing this up again? This is answered in two ways. The first is that Svami Desikan treads in the footsteps of Acharyas prior to him. In this instance, he follows the lead of Sri Parasara Bhattar who declares "mAnaM pradIpamiva kAruNiko dadAti" which reflects the fact that the most compassionate Lord Ranganatha bestows us with mAnam (sastrams), which are in the form of light that never fades. This is the reason for Svami Desikan's declaration of "anuguNa dashArpitena shrIdhara karuNe samAhita snehA shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM shastramayena sthira pradIpena" in verse 18 of the Daya Satakam. In the Pancharatra Samhitha it is declared "sAkShAt nArAyaNo devaH kRtvA martya mayIm tanum magnAn uddharate lokAn kAruNyAt shAstrapANinA". The import of this statement is that Lord Narayana, comes forth as an Acharya and out of compassion provides His helping hand of the sastras to enable the upliftment of struggling jIvans. Hence, Svami Desikan uses this statement as the motivation for this verse of the Daya Satakam. This verse commences with the tribute "bhIme nityaM bhava jalanidhau majjatAM mAnavAnAm". "bhIme" denotes that which is extremely scary or one which strikes fear. In this context, the description is of the ocean of samsara denote by "bhava jalanidhau". Superficially, the waters of an ordinary ocean may look gentle. However, if one is struck by a couple of waves, it causes great wounds to the body. Furthermore, this ocean is infested by sharks, whales, and alligators, making it even more dangerous to enter.

Next, the ocean of samsara is examined. In this context what are the scary creatures like whales, sharks, and alligators? The Samsara Ocean is infested by creatures that are far more deadly compared to the common whales, sharks, and alligators. The two characteristics that permeate the Samsara Ocean are kAmam (desire) and krodham (anger). These are defined by Sri Bhashyakarar in his exposition of Chapter 3 of the GitAbhAshyam. Kamam is desire. If it is for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam it is a good desire. However, if it is for pleasing the senses and looking for something unattainable, this desire is unacceptable since it can yield severely adverse consequences. Specifically, such desires have the potential to drive one to any extent and extreme to fulfill them. Then one contends with either the disappointment of not having realized these desires or begetting something that is exactly the opposite of these desires, namely something that is totally undesirable. When the latter happens, the common tendency is to identify the root cause or

person that is responsible for this. The emotion developed towards this root cause or person is defined as anger by Svami SrI Bhashyakarar. "krodho hanyAt gurUnapi" is the statement that describes this state, namely in a fit of anger, one would not hesitate to even kill their own Acharya. Can there be anything scarier? Therefore, the two enemies are kAmam and krodham. If these are conquered nothing more is required. However, these can never be eliminated. Hence, the Ocean of Samsara, which is replete with these is scarier than the commonly encountered shark/whale/alligator infested ocean. This is captured in the statement "bhIme nityaM bhava jalanidhau" Shankaracharya describes the plight of one caught up in the Samsaric Ocean through the statement "punarapi jananaM punarapi maraNaM punarapi jananI jaTare shayanam" denoting the fact that one is caught in the interminable cycle of births and deaths. This is the plight of baddha jivans being tossed hither and tither by the waves of the Samsaric Ocean. "majjatAM" is the salutation from the present verse of the Daya Satakam describing the plight of those being tortured by the waves of the samsaric ocean. Here it is important to note that Daya Devi has taken root on the Venkatam hill. She looks down and beholds the struggling jivans in the ocean of Samsara being tossed up and down sometimes giving the impression that they are drowning and at other times being tossed up by the waves. It is important to distinguish this from a sport where one can do this in a single instance sometimes being drowned and at other times coming up with the cresting wave. To make this distinction, Svami Desikan characterizes the plight of the suffering jivans through the tribute "nityam majjatAm" namely that the jivan is forever caught up in the waters of the Samsaric ocean with no apparent escape route. Daya Devi for a moment even wonders if the struggling jivan may ride a high wave and get out of this samsaric ocean. However, the jivan is always tossed right back in the middle of the vast samsaric ocean. Therefore, She recognizes the "nityam majjatAm" plight of the jivan and that it does not stand a chance at escape from this ocean.

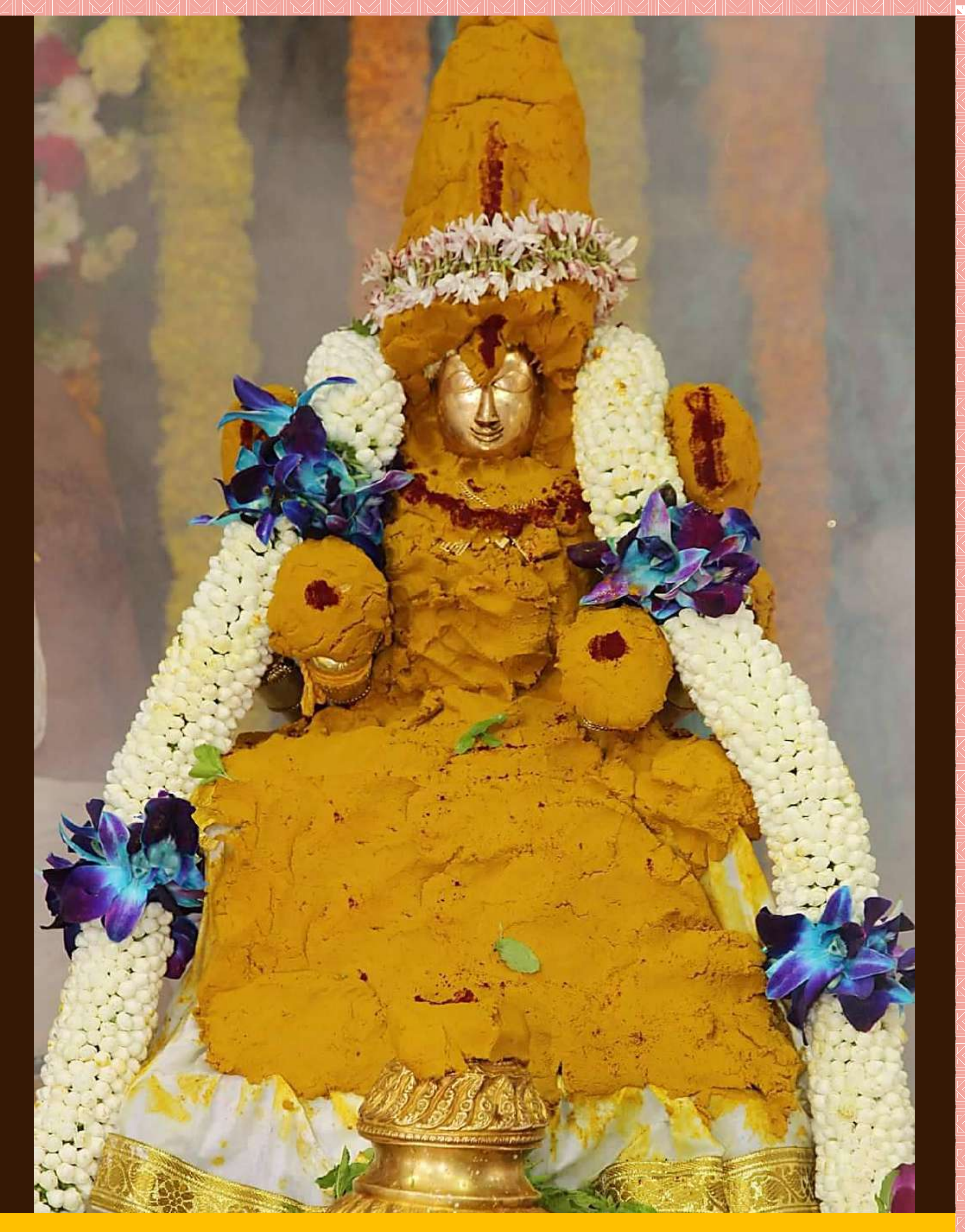
Next Daya Devi's help for these struggling jIvarAsis (baddha jivans) is captured through the tribute "AlambArthaM vR^iShagiripatistvannideshAt prayu~Nkte" namely that Daya Devi looks at Lord Srinivasa and imposes a command on Him. This is due to the fact that Daya Devi is none other than Thayar, who has Lord Srinivasa under Her control. Specifically, She draws the Lord's attention to the plight of struggling jivan, who is being relentlessly tossed up and down by the waters of the Samsaric Ocean and remarks "Do You know who this jivan is? This is Our child. He belongs to Us." She then asserts somewhat angrily "How can You remain a silent spectator when He is suffering thus". As a result, the

tribute “tvannideshAt vR^iShagiripati prayu~Nkte” denotes the fact that bound by the command of Daya Devi, the Lord lends His hand. This is intended to help the baddha jivan rise up from the samsaric ocean and gain redemption. When one offers a helping hand it must be understood that the hand must be strong enough to support the jivan being rescued and safely extricate the jivan from the bonds of the samsaric ocean. Otherwise, the one offering a helping hand will drown along with the jivan. For example, one skilled in swimming may try to rescue another unskilled at swimming and on the verge of drowning. However, the fear of the drowning individual can easily restrict the skilled swimmer and come in the way of his rescue act. Therefore, rescuing one that is drowning is not a trivial task. It requires considerable skill, strength, and alertness of mind. In this context, the rescuer needs to operate from a safe distance so as to not be restricted by the fear of the one being rescued and yet be able to safely extricate the drowning being. With respect to the Daya Satakam tribute “vR^iShagiripatistvannideshAt prayu~Nkte” the reference is to Lord Srinivasa lending His hand, which has the Sastras. This hand is glorified by Svami Desikan as “shAstrapANim prayu~Nkte praj~nA sAraM” to establish the fact that this hand bearing the sastram is essence of all knowledge.



“vR^iShagiripatistvannideshAt prayu~Nkte”

The sastras provide “tyAjya upAdheyam” namely they instruct one in things that need to be given up and things that need to be preserved. When one is admitted to a hospital for treatment of an illness, it is customary to receive discharge instructions when the patient is being released from the hospital. The discharge instructions include a list of acceptable and unacceptable diet as well as a list of dos and don’ts. The sastrams in a like manner provide instructions for dos and don’ts in one’s life. The sastras bestow enlightenment as well as the knowledge of artha pancakam, which is jIvAtma svarUpam (essential nature of the jivatma), paramAtma svarUpam (essential nature of the paramAtma), upAya svarUpam (essential nature of the means to attain Paramatma), phala svarUpam (essential nature of the fruit of attaining paramatma) and phala virodhi svarUpam (essential nature of the obstacles that preclude attainment of the fruit). This is glorified in the tribute “praj~nyAsAram”. Next the tribute “prakR^iti mahatA mUla bhAgena juShTaM” is dwelt upon. The helping hand of the Lord should be firmly anchored to His shoulder. In this instance the Vedam glorifies Lord Narayana as “tasya prakR^iti lInasya yaH paraH sa maheshvaraH” The root of all the sastrams lies in the first aksharam of “praNavam” namely “a”. The tribute “mUla bhAgena juShTaM” refers to the fact that the root of the sastram is fortified by praNavam or more precisely, the first aksharam of praNavam “a”. The Vedam glorifies the elevated role of PraNavam in the rk “yo vedAdau svaraH prokto vedAnte cha pratiShThitaH tasya prakR^itilInasya yaH paraH sa maheshvaraH” to highlight the fact that PraNavam is uttered at the start and end of all Vedam recitation and that it functions as the support for all Vedanta. That which is the root cause of everything in the universe is the aShtAkShara mantram. The critical support for this mantram too is PraNavam. Due to the fact that the Lord’s hand contains the sastrams, whose root is the PraNavam, it is greatly fortified. The hand has five fingers. However, the Vedam constituting the hand has numerous shAkhas (branches). Specifically, Sama Vedam has one thousand shakhas. The essential messages from those thousand shakhas were transformed into chaste Tamil by Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi. The fingers serve as the alankAram (ornament) for the hand. This is further beautified by rings and the like. In a similar vein, that which function as the ornaments for the numerous shakhas of the Vedam are the kalyANa guNams (auspicious qualities) of Lord Narayana. The Vedic statement “sarve Veda yatpadamAmananti” describes the fact that all Vedas glorify the feet of Lord Narayana. This lends inherent beauty to the Vedam which is alluded to by the tribute “subhagam” in this Daya Satakam verse. Furthermore, the eulogy “anagham” from this verse denotes the fact that these Veda shakhas are



Lord Srinivasa lends His helping hand bearing the sastrams due to the command of Daya Devi

blemishless, namely they are free from faults or defects of any kind. It must also be borne in mind that the Veda shakhas are eternal just like Lord Narayana. This is described by Svami Desikan in the tribute "shAshvataM" of this Daya Satakam verse. The import of this tribute is that due to the fact that it is blemishless and eternal, the hand of the Lord bearing the shastras is superior to the hand of common beings. For example, a common person may be strong enough to rescue another in a single instance. However, it is impossible for them to repeat this act time and time again. On the other hand, the sastram bearing hand of Lord Srinivasa is constantly engaged in redeeming suffering jivans without fail. The tribute "vR^iShagiripatiH prayu~Nkte" of this verse needs to be understood in this context as Lord Srinivasa lends His helping hand bearing the sastrams due to the command of Daya Devi. The instruction from Svami Desikan in this instance is that when the benevolent Lord Srinivasa lends His helping hand at the command of Daya Devi, one must hold on to this hand. The inner meaning is that Lord Srinivasa blesses us with the gift of the Sastram. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to conform to its dictates. If one leads a life in conformance with the sastram, it will lead them to the world of ultimate bliss, Sri Vaikuntam. Therefore, it is important to seek refuge at the feet of Lord Srinivasa, due to the Daya Devi inspired act of compassion (in view of Her declaration "This jivan belongs to Us") on His part due to which one can become a receptacle of the combined anugraham of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. In conclusion, salutations are offered to the feet of Lord Srinivasa, Daya Devi and Svami Desikan, who revealed this path for redemption on account of the combined grace of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"We people drown ourselves in the deep dreaded ocean of samsara - worldly life and pleasures. We are not able to rise above it, reach the shore and escape the recurrent cycle order. To save and help such men like me, You let the Lord help us. At Your instance, Oh Daya Devi! the Lord lent an arm of Sastra, so as to say, which is in the form of knowledge, wisdom, and elucidation so that discerning individuals can benefit. The arm of Sastra, so to say, is sturdy, faultless, unambiguous; it stems from the fundamental of PraNavam; is based on Ashtaksharam and has five branches (implied by five fingers representing Artha-Panchakam). The Vedic literature is the prime Shastra; it is not man-made; it is eternal and faultless. It can guide in all emergencies. It is in sweet tenor. Catching hold of it people can rise above and escape from the deep water of the Samsara ocean."

Slokam 47

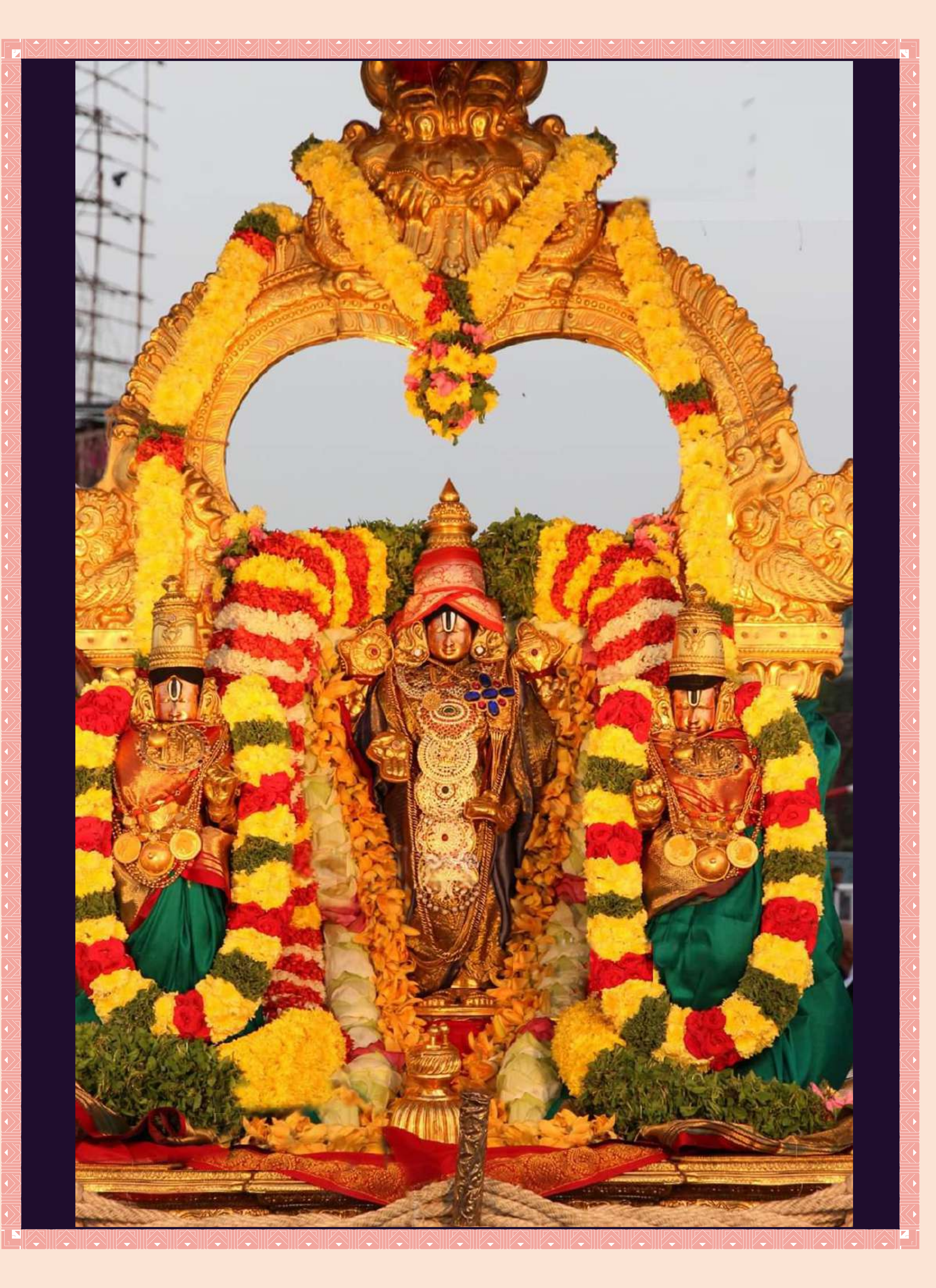
विद्वत् सेवा कतक निकषैर्वीत पङ्काशयानां
पद्मा कान्तः प्रणयति दये दर्पणं ते स्वशास्त्रम्।
लीला दक्षां त्वदनवसरे लालयन् विप्रलिप्सां
माया शास्त्राण्यपि दमयितुं त्वत्प्रपन्न प्रतीपान्॥ ४७ ॥

vidvat sevA kataka nikaShairvIta pa~NkAshayAnAM
padmA kAntaH praNayati daye darpaNaM te sva shAstram|
lIlA dakShAM tvadanavasare lAlayan vipra lipsAM
mAyA shAstrANyapi damayituM tvat prapanna pratIpAn||47



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "This verse "vidvat sevA kataka nikaShairvIta pa~NkAshayAnAM padmA kAntaH praNayati daye darpaNaM te sva shAstram|lIlA dakShAM tvadanavasare lAlayan vipra lipsAM mAyA shAstrANyapi damayituM tvat prapanna pratIpAn|" is important in highlighting the glory of the Srivaishnava tradition in accordance with the prescriptions of the Pancharatra shastram. In the previous verse, the Daya Devi orchestrated help to suffering jivans in the ocean of Samsara through the sastram-laden helping hand of Lord Srinivasa was highlighted. The statement therein was intended to highlight the greatness of the Vedas in keeping with the declaration "vedA shAstrAt paraM nAsti na daIvam keshavAt param" namely that among all Sastras, the Vedam reigns supreme. In order to completely understand the Vedas it becomes important to gain mastery over the six Vedangas which are niruktam (etymology), jyotisham (astrology/astronomy), shIkSha (phonetics), chandas (meter), vyAkaraNam (grammar), and kalpam (rituals). Furthermore, when it comes to nyAyam, the declaration "kANaDam paNinIyam ca sarva shAstropakArakam" prevails, namely the works of KANaDa and PANini's grammar rules need to be mastered to understand any sastram comprehensively. In this context, those who have studied vyAkaraNa and mImAmsa are known as pankti pAvanas. Due to various circumstances, one may be forced to speak with those that should not be spoken with, or one may not be able to speak with those who need to be spoken with. Additionally, one may be forced to be in places that are forbidden. These are proscribed acts according to the sastras. However, if one who has engaged in these

acts partakes of food in the company of those who have mastered vyAkaraNa and mImAmsa, they are rid of the resulting sins from the aforementioned acts and become extremely pure. This is the meaning of the term "pankti pAvana". Each of these disciplines such as vyAkaraNam, nyAyam, mimAmsam have as their source maharishis of great caliber such as PaNini, KANaDa, Jaimini and the like. These are elevated jivAtmas. However, when tracing the origin of the Pancharatra sastram, it goes back to Lord Narayana Himself - the ParamAtma. Therefore, Svami Desikan selects this verse to highlight the glory of the Pancharatra sastram. The tribute "vidvat sevA kataka nikaShairvIta pa~NkAshayAnAM" conveys an amazingly insightful perspective. ThEtthAnkoTTai is the seed commonly known as clearing-nut. When this seed is ground and mixed with impure water, it has the characteristic of ensuring that the impurities settle at the bottom of the water container, allowing for use of the pure water at the top of the container. If one has no choice but to partake of water that is not pure (let's say even if the water is from the Sarasvati River, which is extremely sacred, but is mixed with slush containing sand and weeds) and is therefore unfit for consumption but must necessarily be partaken of to quench one's thirst, the mixing of ground thEtthAnkoTTai facilitates the use of this water. This is the perspective conveyed by Svami Desikan in this verse. Sastras are of three types - sAtvIka sastram, rAjasIka sastram, and tAmasIka sastram analogous to the three types of purANams. sAtvIka sastrams are characterized by a direct instruction of what is good and that by following which one is directly led to Lord Narayana. The rAjasIka sastram is one which might initially point one in wrong direction but ultimately resorts to course correction and leads one on a good path. tAmasa sastram is one which constantly leads one on the wrong path and ensures the follower is condemned to life in hell. Thus, it is apparent that among sastras, the sAtvIka sastras are supreme. For example, if one is not performing the sandhyAvandanam, a knowledgeable elder instructs him in the error of his ways and urges him to perform this duty. Specifically, performance of the morning sandhyAvandanam at the prescribed time is instructed in the salutation "vande aruNedvIpe prakShipantiyat pradakShiNamprakramanti". In particular, the arghyam that is offered during this period is more powerful than the Vajra weapon of Indra as declared by the Vedam. The asuras known as mandehar are waiting to inflict trouble. They received a boon from Brahma that they would be able to devour the Sun daily. However, Brahma while granting their request also warned them that they will be destroyed when those who perform the morning and evening sandhyavandanam offer arghyam with the utterance of the appropriate mantras. This is documented in the tribute "udyantamastamyantam



AdityaM abhidhyAyan kurvan brAhmaNO vidvAnthsakalaM bhadramashnute". (Taittriya AraNyakam 2.2.1) Therefore, the power of arghyam offered during SandhyAvandanam is very great. The mantram instructs us in the fact that performance of the prescribed Sandhya duty results in protection of all. One may counter this by saying that one does not have the discernment to know what is good and what is bad. However, the Vedam message suggests that this is irrelevant. Even if one does not possess the discriminating knowledge, merely performing the prescribed duty results in the well-being of all. Sastrams such as this which only have our well-being in mind belong to the category of sAtvIka sastram. Among these sAtvIka sastrams, the Pancharatra sastram shines forth according to Svami Desikan's YatirAja Saptati tribute "kamapyAdyA guruM vande kamalA gR^ihamedhinam pravaktA cChandasAM vaktA pAncarAtrasya yaH svayam". Chandas in this tribute refers to the Vedam, which functions as the life breath of Lord Narayana in accordance with the tribute "nishvasitam veda" by Sri Kuresha. Just like Lord Narayana, the Vedas too are eternal. Since they have no human authorship, they are decreed to be perfect and blemishless in the same manner as Lord Narayana. The Vedam in its pristine form (without any change) is passed on as instruction by Lord Narayana time after time. Lord Narayana of such glory is the source of the Pancharatra sastram. "padmA kAntaH praNayati" in the context of this verse of the Daya Satakam refers to the fact that Lord Srinivasa, the consort of SrI has expounded upon the Pancharatra sastram. It may be asked for whom is this sastram exposited? The answer to this question comes about from the tribute "vItapa~NkAshayAnAM" of this verse. Those who are rid of the dirt denoted by aj~nAnam (nescience) and pApam (sins) are characterized as "vItapa~NkAshayAnAM". Thus, it needs to be understood that this sastram is meant for those possessing citta shuddhi. Only those possessed of this can understand and appreciate the nuances of Pancharatra sastram. It can then be asked will the cittam forever be pure? The answer is a resounding no. The cittam here refers to the mind. The mind becomes easily confused due to aj~nAnam (nescience) and pApam (sins). For example, one may listen to an upanyAsam where it is expounded upon that "Lord Narayana is the Supreme Being and that He always acts with the sole aim of ensuring the well-being of the entire universe. If something adverse happens from a laukika perspective, the mind gets shattered. This state befalls even the one rendering the upanyAsam. Then it may be asked of the UpanyAsakar, being so knowledgable, is it not possible to withstand this calamitous occurrence? The answer is again no. This is due to the fact that even though the upanyAsakar is well versed in the nuances of the sastram, he does not

possess the maturity and tranquility of mind like Maharishis. Therefore, the upanyAsakar too is bound by pApa karma, as a result of which the mind becomes shattered in the face of a calamitous occurrence. Additionally, there is also the bond of aj~nAnam. Only when one is freed from both the sins and ignorance can tranquility of the mind prevail. It is only for those beings rid of sins and ignorance that Lord Narayana has created the Pancharatra sastram. Only such beings can appreciate the loftiness of this sastram. Here the dR^iShTAntam (perspective) and dArShTAntikam (final message) need to be appreciated. Here the example of thEtthAnkoTTai comes to the fore. A container bears dirty water, which is unsuitable for use. However, when the ground thEtthAnkoTTai is added to this, it causes the impurity to settle at the bottom of the container enabling the use of clear water from the top. Specifically, the analogy to the container, water and thEtthAnkoTTai needs to be made. In this context, the container is denoted by the mind (manas), while the dirty water denotes the confusion caused to the mind by aj~nAnam and pApam. The tribute "vidvat sevA katakanikaShaiH" from this verse of the Daya Satakam referring to service rendered to Vidvans denotes the ground thEtthAnkoTTai seed. This leads to the question who is the Vidvan? It is common to give sambhavanam to learned ones uttering the Veda mantram "vedaṃ vidvAMsam abhito vadanti" Does vidvan denote one who has performed Veda adhyayanam, or does it pertain to one who has mastered the sastras, or does it apply to one who exposits on the sastras in kAlakshepam mode or does it apply to one performing an upanyasam or does it apply to one that excels in anuShTAnam? The reference of Vidvan is for one who has performed Veda adhyayanam at the feet of a sadAchArya, learnt the nuances of all the sastras from the sadAchArya, understood the import of the sastras gained in this manner, adopts these sastraic instructions in daily practice, and instructs deserving sishyas in these sastrams is called a Vidvan. If these onerous requirements define a Vidvan, such persons would be extremely difficult to come by due to the fact that only a handful may exist in keeping with these demands. Therefore, it may be sufficient to regard as a Vidvan, one who has received the instruction of these sastrams from a great AchArya and practices these instructions in his day-to-day life. Therefore, this vidvan kaimkaryam is like the ground thEtthAnkoTTai seed, which purifies the water in the container. Here it must be noted that a one-off meeting with a Vidvan and rendering some kaimkaryam is insufficient. It should be sustained over a long period of time. Only then does clarity of mind come about. The tribute "katakanikaShaiH" from this Daya Satakam verse refers to the fact that those who have their aj~nAnam and pApam destroyed due to "vidvat seva" are blessed by

Lord Srinivasa to appreciate the Pancharatra sastram. The glory of the Pancharatra sastram is highlighted in the eulogy “darpaNaM te sva shAstram” from this Daya Satakam verse. The meaning of this tribute is that the Pancharatra Sastram functions as a mirror for Daya Devi. This again highlights the greatness of Lord Srinivasa’s Daya, namely the Pancharatra Sastra is a glorification of Daya Devi. The Pancharatra Sastram enables us to gain a darsanam of Lord Ranganatha in archa form, the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa in archa form, and enables us to appreciate the five types of avataras that Lord Narayana takes (para, vyUha, vibhava, hArda, and archa). The PancharAtra sastram provides life support for many Srivaishnava temples by outlining the principles and practices to be adhered from idol consecration to conduct of daily rituals. Most significantly, it depicts the glory of the Archa murti of Lord Narayana. The Azhvar declares “Atiyanjyoti uruvai anku vaitthinku pirRandAr” denoting the fact that the Archa murti of Lord Narayana is identical to the Lord residing in Sri Vaikuntam in terms of the characteristics of the aprAkR^ita divya mangala vigraham. Svami Bhashyakarar waxes eloquent on the greatness of the Archa form of Lord Narayana in his exposition of the Gita Bhashyam pertaining to the discussion on the Lord’s avatara rahasyam (the reason for the Lord’s incarnation). Again it must be noted that the glory of the Archa form is first revealed in the Pancharatra Sastram. The concept of SharaNAgati too is exposited in great detail in the Pancharatra sastram. The main objective of Daya Devi is loka rakShaNam (ensure the well-being of the entire universe). She instructs beings of the universe in the manner “You are all akinchanas (incapable of any means) and hence cannot undertake the arduous prescriptions of Karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga. Therefore, resort to the path of unconditional total surrender to the Lotus Feet of Srinivasa, which is readily available to you. The moksham which is attained by bhakti yogis will also be available to you upon resorting to the path of SharaNAgati. The paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam available to Bhakti Yogis upon begetting Moksham will also be accessible to you. Therefore, it is only for you that the Pancharatra sastram has been created. The Pancharatra sastram brings to the forefront the nirhetuka kR^ipa of Lord Narayana, that is his essential nature of compassion towards all beings. Here an important question arises: If the Lord is exuding compassion for all beings, where is the need to perform any act to beget His grace? The Pancharatra Sastram answers this through the statement that the act of SharaNAgati is merely an excuse to invoke the free flow of the Lord’s inherent compassion. At the same time the Sastram instructs us that one must not become conceited about the fact that they are assured of moksham on account of their performance of SharaNAgati. It must be borne in mind that this



Archa murti of Lord Narayana is identical to the Lord residing in Sri Vaikuntam

elevated benefit is conferred entirely due to the limitless grace of Lord Narayana in keeping with the declaration "madIyaIva dayayA". The Pancharatra sastram highlights the krupai of Lord Narayana, which is none other than Daya Devi! This sastram is glorified as "te darpaNam" in this verse of the Daya Satakam. Namely, the sastram functions as a mirror for Daya Devi reflecting Her glory everywhere. Here it must be noted that everyone longs for the "kannADi-arai-sevai" (darsanam through mirror arrangement) of the Lord. Hence the practice in many Temples to provide the Lord's darsanam in this manner, when He is adorned with visheSha alankArams. For example, in nAcchiyAr tirukkOlam (when Lord Narayana is decorated and eulogized as Thayar), it is customary to first have a darshan of the Lord and then behold the image in the mirror. The latter darshanam enhances the Lord's beauty several-fold. Details of the alankaram that are not discernable in the direct viewing become known through the mirror image. In a like manner, the Pancharatra Sastram reveals to us facets of Daya Devi, which may not be readily apparent even in a pratyakSha darshanam (direct viewing). The beauty of the kannADi-arai sevai is that one beholds the Lord no matter what direction one turns.



Ayna Mahal -Tirumala

At the shrine of Srinivasa in the aynA mahal at the Venkatam hill, which has the mirrors installed, one is able to experience this no matter what direction one turns and whether one looks up or down. When one beholds the Lord looking down, one is scared to take a step for fear of stepping on the Lord. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, this Pancharatra sastram, which reveals to us Daya Devi in kannADi-arai-sevai, was created by Lord Narayana for "vItapa~NkAshayAnAM" (the meaning of this term has been exposited earlier in this narrative).

Svami Desikan is known for his outstanding choice of words. He refers to this in the YatirAja Saptati tribute "paruShAtivAda parivAdapaIshuna prabhR^itiprabhUtapatanIyapa~NkilA svadate mamAdya subhagA sarasvatI yatirAja kIrtikatakaIrvishodhitA" Svami Desikan sets out to glorify Sri Bhashyakarar. At this juncture, Svami Desikan is confronted with the question "Sri Bhashyakarar is greater than the Lord Himself. How could one with impure thoughts, harsh words and one who resorts to lies possibly be able to glorify Sri Bhashyakarar?" Svami Desikan answers this "It is irrelevant here because I possess the thEtthAnkoTTai (clearing-nut). What is the clearing-nut? It is the declaration "yatirAja kIrtikatakaIrvishodhitA" namely the very act of glorifying Sri Bhashyakarar renders his words extremely pure in the manner of the ground clearing-nut purifying the water in a container. Furthermore, since the Rahasyarthams were gained through kalakshepam at the feet of Svami AppuLar, there is no need to worry about the words used in glorifying Svami Bhashyakarar. In a like manner, people rendering upanyasams and those who listen to them are rendered pure if the Sri Suktis of Svami Desikan are expounded upon in the upanyasam. So far, the meaning for the first two lines of the verse have been exposited. The next two lines are replete with meaning and give rise to a number of positions which require careful and comprehensive treatment. Lord Srinivasa creates all sastras. We accept these sastrams. For example, Jyotisham (astrology) is accepted as one of the sastras. Only one who has learnt this properly from a qualified Acharya can make predictions that turn out to be true. On the other hand, if one by chance is able to pull off a correct prediction or two without complete mastery over the sastram, it is due to some sukR^itam. However, this cannot prevail always. Therefore, it is not to be regarded lightly. There are several exceptions to the rules underlying this sastram. Therefore, unless one is intimately familiar with these nuances, one should not rush to make predictions. Otherwise, this can have serious consequences. "mAyA shAstrANyapi damayituM" is the salutation from this verse that is examined here. Mohana Sastram is one of the sastrams. This is a tAmasa sastram, which has been created by Lord Srinivasa. It can be asked "How could a tAmasa sastram be created

by Lord Srinivasa?" The answer to this comes forth due to the fact that Daya Devi, who is the Empress, due to Lord Srinivasa being the Emperor of the entire universe. When one views Sanskrit plays the terms dhIrodhArtham, DhIrodhattham, DhIrOlalitham are commonly encountered. These are the characters in the play conceived by the composer. The composer is in uttama (extremely elevated) status. They would only see the empress (rAja mahishi) and no one else. The DhIralalitham character while extremely appreciative of the empresss also behaves affectionately towards other women servitors in the absence of the empress. In this instance, when Daya Devi is not to be seen, Lord Narayana in a moment of moham towards the other servitors, who are not of the caliber of Daya Devi, creates the Mohana Sastra. This is described in the tribute "lAlayan vipra lipsAM mAyA shAstrANyapi damayituM" of this Daya Satakam verse. It may then be asked what is this Mohana Sastram? First, it is to be recognized that this Mohana Shastram is different from Bhagavad Sastram. Bhagavad Sastram is the cause of upliftment for all "ujjIvana hetu". This quality characterizes the Pancharatra Sastram. On the other hand, Mohana Sastram is "naraka hetu" in that its followers are led to hell, which causes immense suffering. For example, the sastras followed by CArvakAs (materialists) fits the description of Mohana Sastram. This Charvaka school does not recognize the difference between the shariram and Atma. Instead, it exposits that one can enjoy a good life as long as one is in this world, not worrying about ekadasi upavasam, anushtanams of Sandhyavandanam and the like. Additionally, they raise questions of the sort that the existence of one in Sri Vaikuntam is unknown. All that the scripture states is "na ca punarAvartate na ca punarAvartate" namely that one who reaches Sri Vaikuntam does not return to the earth. In the absence of one who has returned from Sri Vaikuntam and described life there, why should one torture oneself with the demands of anushtanam and sastraic principles? Instead, be content with life as is and enjoy the comforts on offer. This misleading sastram is called Mohana Sastram. The danger with this sastram is that it advocates the performance of sinful acts and that too without remorse, resulting in the most egregious violations of the Satvika Sastraic prescriptions. This is the Mohana Sastram created by Lord Narayana. If Lord Srinivasa created this Mohana Shastra due to being under the influence of "vipralipsAm" it negates all the esoteric messages stated thus far and dismisses the message from the subsequent verses too. Since this raises a number of questions, a complete description of the import from the last two lines of this verse can be arrived at only when these questions are comprehensively answered. First it has been stated that the Sastras have been created by Lord Srinivasa, while under the command of Daya Devi. Now, if the Lord

has engaged in the creation of Mohana sastram due to the influence of "lAlayan vipralipsAm" in the absence of Daya Devi as described by the "tvadanavasare" tribute of this verse, it negates the fact that all Sastras were created while Lord was under the command of Daya Devi. It also gives the impression that Lord Srinivasa who was previously described as being totally under the sway of Daya Devi now also comes under the sway of "vipralipsa". Even if this is so, the creation of the Mohana sastram under the sway of "vipralipsa" brings about great harm in that it encourages one to proceed on the path of sin. Left to oneself, absent the Mohana Sastram, the individual may be loath to follow the sinful path. However, authenticating this sinful path via sastram, offers the individual free license to take to this path. Therefore, the harm done by the creation of this sastram is quite grievous. The declaration by the Lord himself "kShipAmejasram AsureShu yoniShu" condemns sinners in the above-described manner to be born as Asuras. Thus, it gives rise to another perception that the Lord actually encourages beings to resort to the sinful acts authenticated by the Mohana sastram resulting in a progressive decline from one birth to another. The Upanishad declares "madhaU nishIyati etahyevate asAdya karma". This raises another question. The Lord is the master of all beings in the universe. Therefore, He incurs the responsibility of protecting all beings under His command. Then the question of selectively affording protection to some beings while excluding others (through encouragement to resort to the sinful path) goes against His responsibility of affording protection to all equally. It is analogous to the father of several kids declaring that I shall protect only the first two kids. The rest have to find a means to fend for themselves. Thus, such an instance would result in the Lord losing his "sarva svAmitvam" (Lordship over all beings). Furthermore, the Lord has the trait of "sarvAtma sAdAraNatvam" namely treating everyone equally without discrimination. If He engages in the task of selectively elevating some beings and pushes others on the path of sin leading to their decline it negates the "sarvAtma sAdAraNatvam" trait. This also result in the loss of the Lord's trait of "parama kAruNikatvam" (extreme compassion). In order to preserve these traits, the Lord should not engage in the creation of the Mohana Sastram. Therefore, He should not be swayed by "vipralipsa". Only when all these facets are addressed would it be possible to provide a satisfactory explanation for the tribute "lAlayan vipra lipsAM mAyA shAstrANyapi damayituM" of this verse. All of these aspects are addressed by Svami Desikan himself in the tribute "tvat prapanna patIpAn" of this verse. That is, in order to protect those who have surrendered to You, oh Daya Devi!, it is necessary to eliminate those opposed to these beings. Therefore, to facilitate the elimination of those opposed to Your

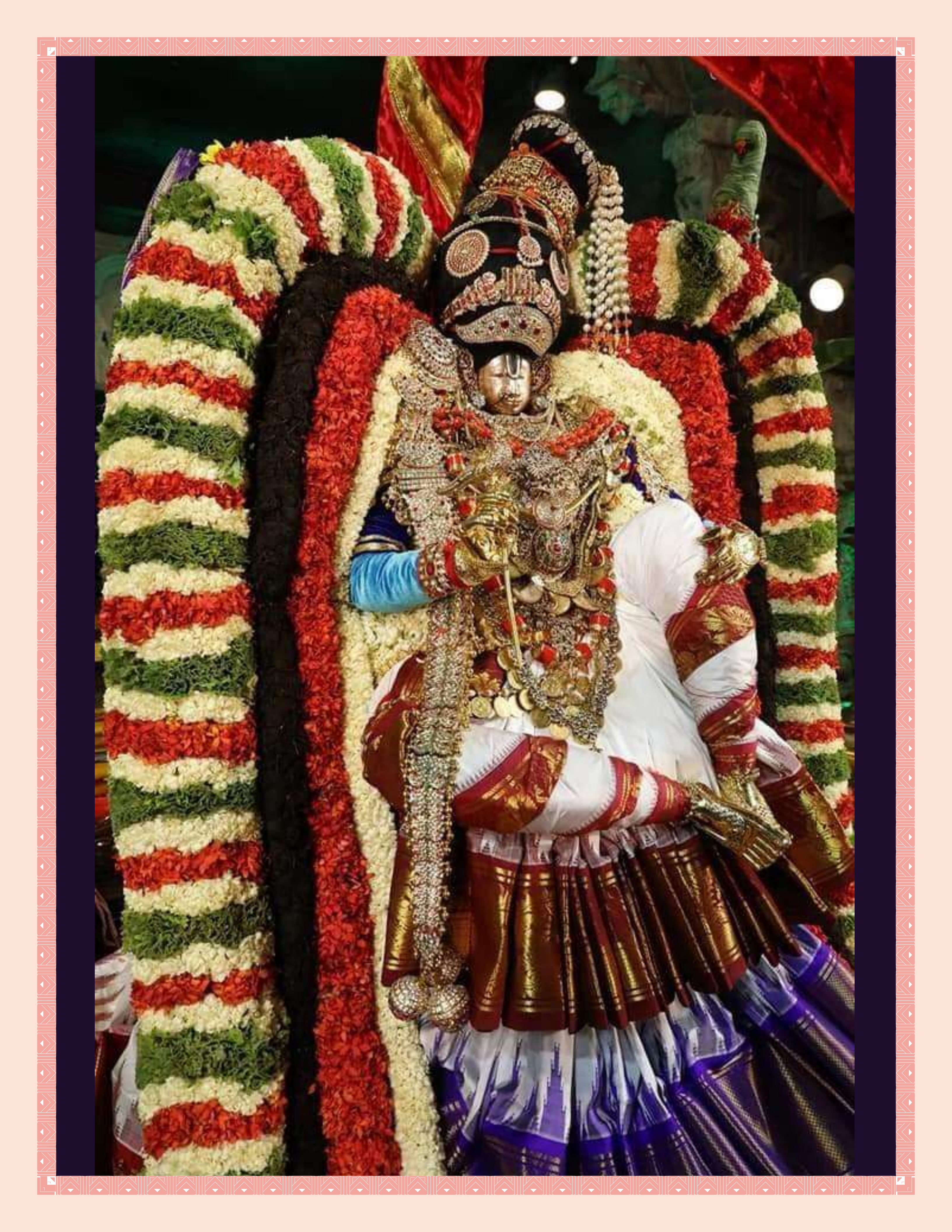
sharaNAgatas, the Lord has created the Mohana Sastram. Hence, this too is an act of Daya Devi, who has the Lord under Her command and not "Vipralipsa". In verse 24, Svami Desikan has described the process of ridding the field of weeds in order to ensure unhindered growth of grain-yielding crop as an act of Daya Devi. Thus, the creation of the Mohana sastram to facilitate the de-weeding process is an act of Daya Devi. This seems like an apparently satisfactory answer to the previously raised questions. However, this gives rise to another question. Just as exposited in verse 24, Svami Desikan could have come out directly and stated here that creation of the Mohana Sastram is an act of Daya Devi. Where is the need for the tribute "tvadanavasare" (absence of Daya Devi)? The answer to this question needs to be arrived at after careful analysis. For this one needs to examine specific instances from the Ramayana, Vamana avataram, and Krishna avataram to address this issue. In the Ramayana, Rama sets out alone to go to battle with Khara, DhUshana and fourteen thousand rakshasas. The eulogy "rAmo raktAnta lochanaH" from the Ramayana describes the fact that Lord Rama's eyes became red as He set out for the battle. This offers the impression to His SharaNAgatas that He has arrived to protect them while at the same time it conveys His anger towards the Asuras that are intent on causing harm to His SharaNagatas. Beholding this very sight of Lord Rama's compassionate eyes could have inspired Khara and DhUshaNa to perform sharaNAgati at the Lord's lotus feet. However, they did not resort to this and instead engaged in war with Lord Rama. Consequently, they met their end at Lord Rama's hands as did their fourteen thousand followers. Rama singlehandedly destroying the hordes of Rakshasas stood as eloquent testimony to His valour. However, while killing Vali the Lord did not do it directly. Does this mean Lord Rama was incapable of killing Vali in a straight up combat? Absolutely not. One can understand Ravana's nature from the Ramayanam statement "rAvaNo loka rAvaNaH" This powerful Ravana was effortlessly tucked away under his armpit by Vali. Again killing Vali is a straightforward matter for Lord Rama. However, the circumstances need to be borne in mind. Sugriva sought refuge in Lord Rama and performed sharaNAgati. Accordingly, Lord Rama assured him of protection and promised him that He would kill Vali. Since it was His sworn position to come to the rescue of His sharaNAgata, he remained hidden (to keep up the boon that Vali had received) from Vali's view and undertook the killing of Vali. Next, the Vibhishana sharaNAgati needs to be understood in perspective. Vibhishana advised Ravana that a monkey set fire to Lanka resulting in its total destruction. "This is no ordinary monkey but a messenger of Lord Rama. Therefore, in accordance with his instruction, restore Sita to Lord Rama and you will be freed from all your sins."

However, when nobody heeded his advice, Vibhishana resolved to leave Lanka and seek refuge at Lord Rama's feet in accordance with the statement "parityaktvA maya lanka mitrANi dhanAni ca AjagAma muhUrtena yatra rAmaH sa lakAhmanaH" (I give up all my belongings like property, friends, and wealth to resort to Lord Rama who has Lakshmana by His side). Upon reaching the other side of the Ocean where Rama and the Vanara army had arrived, Vibhishana submitted his appeal to the monkey army chieftains "tyaktvA putrAmshca dhArAmshca rAghavam sharaNam gataH nivedayitumAM kShipraM vibhIShaNAmupastitam sarva loka sharaNyAya rAghavAya mahAtmane" (please go and inform Lord Rama, that Vibhishana having given up his wife and children has arrived at the location of Lord Rama to perform sharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Rama, who is the refuge of the entire universe). As soon as Vibhishana submitted his appeal, the monkeys in the Vanara army began to doubt the sincerity of this appeal. They were viewing Vibhishana as belonging to the group of their adversary and questioning the motivation for him to come to Lord Rama. Lord Rama is occupying a stone seat while all the monkeys of the Vanara army are seated on the ground below him. He enquires of every monkey whether or not he should accept Vibhishana. Each monkey expresses opposition to accepting Vibhishana due to various concerns. At the end, when Lord Rama turned to Hanuman enquiringly, Hanuman answered "This Vibhishana is an elevated person. He is of pure mind and soul. However, the ultimate decision to accept him or not is with You, Svami." Lord Rama then declared "anayenam hari shreShTa datta asyAbhayam mayA" (Even before all of you could speak, the very moment Vibhishana arrived and submitted his appeal I had assured him of My protection. However, since he would be among you from now on, I wanted to ask each of you for your opinion). In the Rahasya grantham known as Sri AbhayapradhAna sAram, Svami Desikan provides a comprehensive treatment of all the sharaNAgatis that took place in the Ramayanam. The choice of words on the part of Svami Desikan is quite instructive in that although Lord Rama is the emperor of the entire universe, the usage of Maharaja is reserved for Sugriva, while Angada and other Vanara Chiefs are referred to as leaders (mudali) and Lord Rama himself is referred to as Chakravarti Tirumakan (son of Dasharatha Chakravarti). In the context of Vibhishana sharaNAgati, an important question arises in that when the Lord had already made up His mind to offer Abhayam to Vibhishana, where is the need to consult the Vanaras? It is entirely to bring out the nuances of SharaNAgati and make the greatness of sharaNAgati understood by the Vanara army that Lord Rama expounded on the KapOtha vrutthAntham (life-story) and Kanda vrutthAntham and convinced them of His position to accept Vibhishana. The reason for Lord Rama

consulting all the Vanaras is to show that in this instance, Sugriva is the king of the Vanaras. Therefore, any decision that the Lord arrives at must be acceptable to the king and his subjects. Hence Lord Rama, even though He was fully aware of Vibhishana's sincerity and had made up His mind to give him refuge, adopted the approach of consulting all the Vanaras. During the battle with Ravana it is declared in the Ramayanam that "tammAnye rAghavam vIram nArAyaNam anAmayam" (Who do you think this Rama of extraordinary prowess is? He is not a mere mortal. He is verily Lord Narayana in human form). This is the tribute of ManDodari (Ravana's wife) to Lord Rama. Ravana hears this and replies "nanameyam kadAcana svabhAvam duratikramaH" (I am unable to change my nature. As you have stated, I need to bow my ten heads at the Feet of Rama, drink His beauty with my twenty eyes, and offer salutations folding my twenty arms. However, my nature of not bowing before anyone is something that cannot be changed. Therefore, I am unable to accept your advice. Thus, I have to fight with Him). Even then in the first battle, Lord Rama had Ravana at His mercy and could have easily ended his life. However out of extreme compassion, the Lord allowed Ravana to go back, get well rested and come to fight another day, out of the hope that even then it was not too late for Ravana to express remorse for his sinful actions and seek refuge at Lord Rama's feet. Only when Ravana chose to continue on his sinful path did Lord Rama undertake the killing. The boon desired by Bhishma in the Mahabharata war (to meet his end at the hands of Lord Krishna) but was never realized, was obtained by Ravana. In the Mahabharata war Bhishma was inflicting carnage for ten days on the entire Pandava army and Arjuna out of reverence for Bhishma as his grandfather and Acharya was not using his full might to wage war against Bhishma. Lord Krishna upon beholding this resolved to undertake the killing of Bhishma even if it meant breaking his oath to not bear any weapons in the war. Thus, He proceeded with the Sudarshana Chakram in His hand to finish off Bhishma. Bhishma exclaims "ekyEhi phullAksha" (This is the day I have been longing for. Please come and take my life. It will render my life fulfilled). However, lord Krishna could not undertake the killing of Bhishma due to being stopped by Arjuna. Therefore, that which could not be obtained by Bhishma came easily to Ravana. Thus, even the killing at the hands of Lord Rama was a blessing (anugraham) for Ravana. Hence, even the nigraham (killing) of Ravana was in fact an anugraham on account of Lord Rama's Daya declares Svami Desikan. However, even this explanation is insufficient to account for the creation of MAya (Mohana) Sastram in the absence of Daya Devi (tvadanavasare) due to "vipralipsa". Daya Devi is defined as "anugrahAika shaIla". She is glorified in the Yatiraja Saptati as "nityam aj~nyAta nigrahAm" That is the

word nigraham is non-existent in Thayar's dictionary. In a like manner Daya Devi only knows anugraham. Here the thought process of Svami Desikan is that even if the act of nigraham is termed as an act of Daya Devi, in the process of protecting those, who have surrendered to Her, it still poses an asterisk to Her essential nature of affording protection alone and not engaging in any destruction. Therefore, Svami Desikan exposits that the Lord created the MAya sastram (Mohana Sastram) while under the sway of "vipralipsa". Thereby there is no stigma incurred by Daya Devi. This act can easily be explained in terms an analogy whereby sometimes, we may not undertake an act directly but instead have someone else perform the act on our behalf. However, since the process is instigated by us, we bear responsibility for it. Thus, the Lord creating this Mohana Sastram is accounted for in this manner. Next it may be asked, why did the Lord undertake the creation of Mohana sastram? This is answered by the fact that if one incurs apacharam to Lord Srinivasa, He would be forgiving. However, if one incurs apacharam to His SharaNagatas, the Lord has taken the sworn position to annihilate them. Therefore, He leads them to the path of ruin through the creation of the Mohana sastra. This is best illustrated through the life history of Ambarisha. The Lord was powerless to stop the Sudarshana Chakram that harassed Durvasa by pursuing him everywhere he went seeking relief. This was due to his Bhagavata apacharam towards Ambarisha. Thus in the context of the tribute "tvat prapanna patIpAn" from this verse of the Daya Satakam, Lord Srinivasa can never tolerate anyone that incurs apacharam towards those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi by way of sharaNAgati. Therefore, the creation of the MAya Sastram came about to ensure the annihilation of those opposed to the SharaNAgatas of Daya Devi. The Lord took the incarnation of Buddha to deliberately mislead those opposed to the SharaNAgatas of Daya Devi. The premise of Buddha's followers is that the Vedam is not a valid body of knowledge and hence they do not subscribe to its authority. Even though they advocate non-violence (ahimsa), since they are opposed to the tenets of the Vedam (veda shAstrAt paraM nAsti - there can be no greater sastram than the Vedam), this school of thought is a Mohana Sastram. Their line of argument is as follows and is illustrated through a conversation between two individuals A and B. A enquires of B, where did you perform snAnam? B answers in the Ganga River. To this A remarks where in the Ganga Rriver? B answers this as "the same place that you performed snAnam yesterday". A then remarks there is a difference between the water in which I performed snAnam versus the water you performed snAnam in. Since it is not the same water even though you went to the same place in the Ganga as me, you cannot be assured of a cleansing of your sins. Such reasoning ensues in the

followers of Buddha in all matters up to and including the Atma, although seemingly logical, in total violation of the Vedam prescriptions. Therefore, this school of thought belongs in the category of Mohana Sastram. The creator of this system is undoubtedly Lord Narayana. Therefore, the import of this Daya Satakam verse is that the Lord has created the MAya (Mohana) Sastram for the sole purpose of destruction of those who have incurred apacharam towards the sharaNAgatas of Daya Devi. "sva shAstram" in this verse refers to the Bhagavad Sastram, namely the Pancharatra Sastram, which reflects the glory of Daya Devi verily like a mirror. The protection of sharaNAgatas is undertaken by the Lord in the company of His consort-Thayar. More precisely, this is a yaj~nam undertaken by the Lord for which He must necessarily have His consort by His side. This holds for both the upAya dasha (means for attaining Lord Narayana) as well as the phala dasha (the benefit of attaining Lord Narayana). The greatness of Thayar as well as Her status as the empress of the entire universe can be found in the statement "yathA sarvagato viShNuH SrIranapAyinI" implying that just as Lord Vishnu is all pervasive so too is Thayar. In this context it must be remembered that Daya Devi is no different from Thayar and therefore, the glory of Thayar elucidated in the Pancharatra Sastram is a tribute to Daya Devi. Those who appreciate and understand the nuances of SharaNAgati and the glory of Daya Devi as exposited in the Pancharatra Sastram are those noble ones, who have rendered themselves pure due to kaimkaryam for Bhagavatas. Thus, the protection of the SharaNAgatas, who have surrendered to Her, as well as the annihilation of those opposed to these sharaNAgatas through the creation of the Mohana Sastras by the Lord (indirectly on account of Daya Devi) are carried out solely due to Daya Devi. The greatness of the Pancharata Sastra is expounded upon in considerable detail by Svami Bhashyakarar in the Pancharatra AdhikaraNa of the Sri Bhashyam, which provided the foundation stone for entire Visishtadvaita system. Until this time, there was considerable debate on the acceptance of Pancharatra Sastram. However, Bhashyakarar in the Sri Bhashyam devoted the largest adhikaraNa (chapter) to placing this sastram on firm ground through extensive quotation of pramANams. Following the lead of Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Desikan composed a kalakshepa grantham known as Pancharatra Raksha. In the absence of the treatises of Svami Bhashyakarar and Swami Desikan, there would be no valid scriptural authority for the performance of rituals at temples (such as Srirangam, Kanchipuram and the like) or for that matter the performance of Bhagavad Aradhana kramam through Salagrama worship in homes. Even though this sastram was created by the Lord Himself, it is only due to the efforts of Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Desikan that the Sastram could be



placed on a firm foundation. The Vedam no doubt exposits that Lord Narayana is omnipresent. However, how does this help in dhyAnam (contemplation) of the Lord? It is only through the alankArams of NAcchiyar TirukkOlam (Lord Narayana in the form of Sri) of Lord Varadaraja for example, which has the scriptural authority in the Pancharatra Sastram, that enables alpaj~nyAs (those possessing little knowledge) to engage in contemplation of the Lord. Not everyone is endowed with superior knowledge that is the privy of great Maharishis. Therefore, the Sri sUktis of Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Desikan have rendered yeoman service to commoners. Svami Desikan has declared the Sri sUktis of Swami Bhashyakarar to be the clearing nut (thEtthAnkoTTai) for his pure speech. We in turn are fortunate to have the Sri sUktis of Svami Desikan as the clearing nut that purifies us either while expositing on them or while hearing them. Therefore, it is a matter of immense pride to closely follow the Sri sUktis of Svami Desikan and become privy to his grace, which automatically ensures the grace of Daya Devi."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Those who cherish close service at holy seers' precincts would possess a heart cleansed of filth and scum. Oh Daya Devi! The Lord of Padmavati furnishes holy books, spiritual guides, which could serve as perfect mirror to You, reflecting You- i.e., which would clearly be Daya-products so to say. In Your absence-that is when the Lord is not influenced by Daya guna-however, He helped the authoring of deceptive works that would teach anti-spiritual philosophy and bad morals, such as atheism, Buddhism etc. One would be justified in classifying this deceptive mode of approach, as a hand maid to Daya, designed to destroy the devils that prey upon good souls, who are Your dependents.

Such deceptive works are irreligious. However, nothing worthwhile could be accomplished in this world, without Your impact. Hence, I would assume those works as produced without Daya or in the absence of Daya.

1. Deceptiveness is merely a handmaid of Daya

2. Recall from verse 24 that it was noted that Daya is the force activating the growth of paddy crop; Your wrath choosing to be the handmaid to Daya Devi acts towards weeding out the field. In other words, the Lord's wrath has a role. It helps in the paddy production by ridding the field of the weeds. That is, wrath causes the decimation of foes to Dharma-such as Hiranya and Ravana.

3. One needs to assimilate the message carefully. Poetic imaginative portrayal, can easily be missed by dull-headed individuals. Deceptiveness is

personified as a woman; a seducer. If the Queen is away, the low class woman could exert a temptation. Not much must be said on this count since it can turn out to be unorthodox words of offence."



Slokam 48

दैवात् प्राप्ते वृषगिरि तटं देहिनि त्वन्निदानात्
स्वामिन् पाहीत्यवश वचने विन्दति स्वापमन्त्यम्।
देवः श्रीमान् दिशति करुणे दृष्टि मिच्छं स्त्वदीयाम्
उद्घातेन श्रुति परिषदां उत्तरेणाभि मुख्यम्॥ ४८॥

daivAt prApte vR^iShagiri taTaM dehini tvan nidAnAt
svAmin pAhItyavasha vachane vindati svApamantyam|
devaH shrImAn dishati karuNe dR^iShTi michChaM stvadIyAm
udghAtena shruti pariShadAM uttareNAbhi mukhyam||48



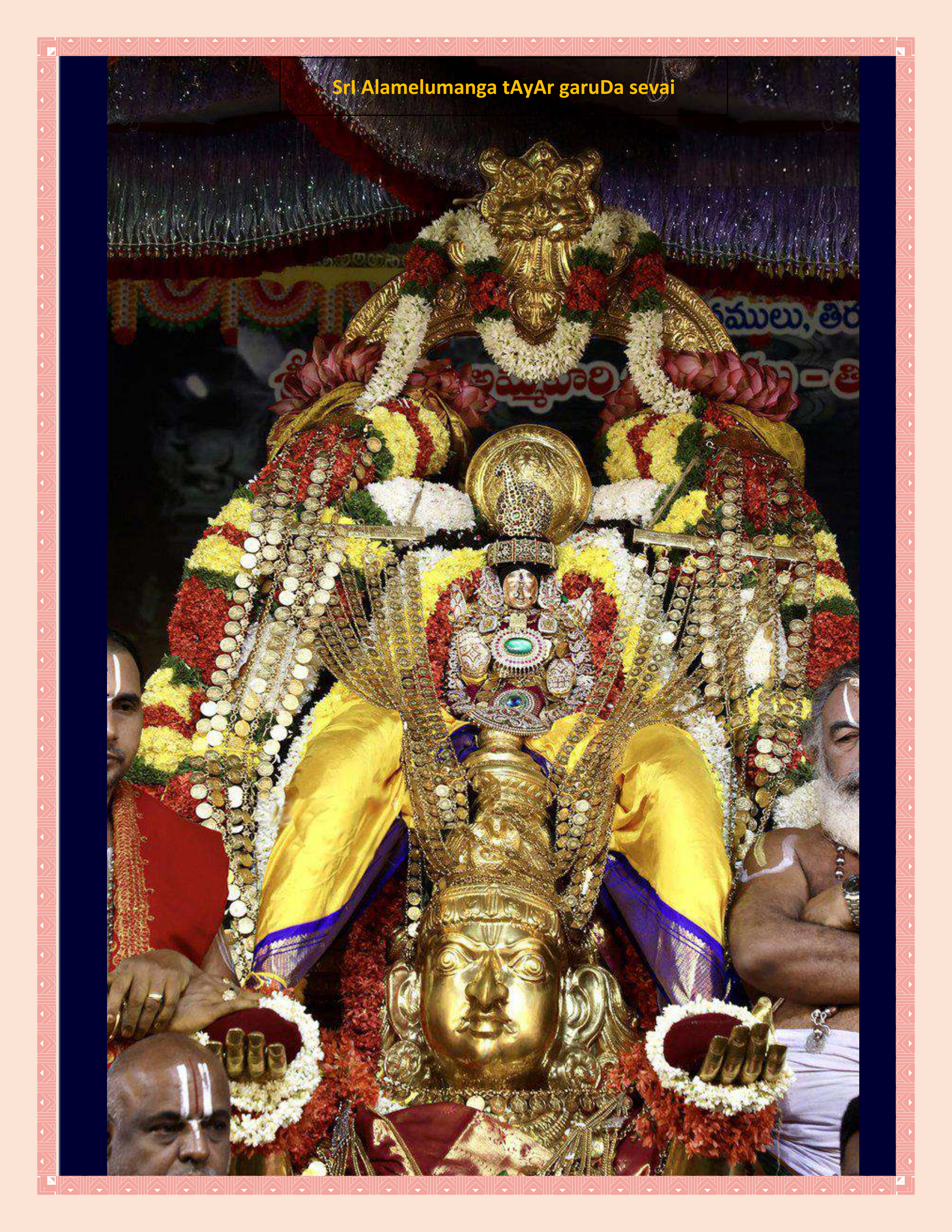
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "This verse is "daivAt prApte vR^iShagiri taTaM dehini tvan nidAnAt svAmin pAhItyavasha vachane vindati svApamantyam devaH shrImAn dishati karuNe dR^iShTi michChaM stvadIyAm udghAtena shruti pariShadAM uttareNAbhi mukhyam" The previous slokam highlighted the glory of the Pancharatra sastram which functions as the mirror for reflecting the magnificence of Daya Devi. This sastram was created by Lord Srinivasa Himself. Additionally, to ensure the destruction of those inimically inclined towards the sharaNagatAs of Daya Devi, the Lord created the Mohana sastram. In this verse, Svami Desikan highlights the anugraham of Daya Devi for those who may be in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill and breathe their last. In the Srimad RahasyatrayasAram, Svami Desikan states that an object being extremely beneficial, or detrimental, or indifferent to us is due to our Karma. For example, an individual may be a close childhood friend with another but as they age, due to some account or another they could become bitter enemies. The reverse can also happen whereby two individuals could be antagonistic towards each other for a good portion of their lives only to become the best of friends towards the end of their lives. Similarly, one may have favorite food items at a given time in their lives only to despise the thought of eating it after many years. On the other hand, an individual may exhibit total indifference in the afore-mentioned context. Why does this come about? This comes about entirely

due to karma. In this verse Svami Desikan declares that when one arrives in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill and utters the prayer "svAmin pAhi" the protection afforded by Lord Srinivasa to the individual is enormous. Specifically, the individual has not arrived seeking Bhagavad Kaimkaryam or Moksham, but instead merely happen to come to the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. It then raises the question. How did the individual come near the Venkatam hill? What is the cause for this? Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute "daivAt prApte" namely that the individual's arrival was entirely due to having received the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi at some point of time. Here it must be noted that the terms adR^iShTam, daivam, and bhAgyam are synonyms for good fortune. In order to beget the bhAgyam to come to the Venkatam hill there must be a cause. Svami Desikan affirms here that the cause for this bhAgyam is Daya Devi. Specifically, the tribute "tvan nidAnAt prApte daivAt" reflects this fact. The purANAs declare "kAshI maraNAn muktiH" namely that there is no doubt about the fact that one who breathes his last at Kashi attains liberation. So much so that large number of people are waiting in expectation of this event. In fact, there is a place known as Mukti Bhavanam at Kashi, which houses a number of aged people. They are anxious to breathe their last at Kashi. The reason for those who breathe their last at Kashi attaining mukti is due to the fact that Lord Shiva, performs the upadesam of the RAma tAraka mantram in their ears. This causes them to beget moksham. Once an Advaiti scholar, who desired to have his end in Kashi, set out with this purpose. However, he breathed his last as the train he was travelling in arrived at the station before Kashi. This was an instance of daivAt aprApte, namely he did not have the bhAgyam of residing in Kashi at the end of his life. Thus, in the context of arriving at the vicinity of the Venkatam hill towards the end of their lives and taking their last breath there, it is necessary to have the anugraham of Daya Devi. There are two things known as "sukR^ita paripAkam" and "duShkR^ita paripAkam". The former prevails when even an atheist turns a corner and performs a good act. The latter remains in force when an extremely pious one resorts to impious acts. Thus, the good and bad acts committed by an individual yield fruit, which must necessarily be borne by the individual. Even the order in which one endures the consequences of good and bad actions is a result of Karma, which is determined by BhagavAn. Here Svami Desikan emphasizes the fact that even an atheist, who has no inclination towards the Lord and is set to reap the consequences of his bad karma, is assisted by Daya Devi. Specifically, when the Lord is ready to ensure that the individual must face the consequences of his bad karma, Daya examines his numerous prior birth to locate something good that he has accomplished and


svAmin pAhi!

brings this to forefront, thereby causing the individual to seek the grace of Lord Srinivasa. The tribute of this verse "tvannidAnAt vR^iShagiri taTaM daivAt prApte" in the anvaya kramam (prose order) reveals the above meaning. The individual referred to in this verse (be it a person or animal) is described as "dehi" to denote anything that has a body. The term dehi is used to highlight the fact that Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi do not engage in any act of partiality or discrimination. If one has incurred an extremely pitiable state either on account of one's birth, deeds, or line of work, that individual is still graced by Daya Devi. The anugraham of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi for such people is the elevated benefit that is accorded to nitya sUris, who inhabit Sri Vaikuntam and are engaged in constant enjoyment of the Lord. Svami Nammazhvar declares "cumantu mAmalar nIr cuDar tUpam koNDu amarntu vAnavar vAnavar kOnoDum namanRezhum tiruvEnkaTam nankaTku caman koL vIDu tarum taDankunRamE" Nothing significant needs to be offered. In the manner outlined by Lord Krishna in the SrImad BhagavadgIta "patram puShpam phalam toyam yo me bhaktyA prayacChati" the Azhvar states that submit anything you can to Lord Srinivasa be it flowers, fruit, water, or leaves and you will be assured of His grace. In the Garuda sevai for Lord Srinivasa at Tirumalai, people admire the Lord majestically seated on Garuda from a distance, being unable to get close due to the large crowd. As the procession comes close, they would break a coconut, and light a piece of camphor by way of offering to Lord Srinivasa. The Lord accepts this offering in the manner of offerings by nitya sUris in Sri Vaikuntam. This is accepted in the same manner as the offerings by the Archakas in accordance with the Agama sastras (yathAvasthitA). The Azhvar declared in his pasuram that Lord Srinivasa is saluted by nitya sUris in Sri Vaikuntam and also by commoners through their offerings. He accepts both of these identically and graces the offerers identically. The paripUrNa brahma anubhavam enjoyed by the nitya sUris at Sri Vaikuntam is also made available to commoners due to the grace of Lord Srinivasa at the behest of Daya Devi. The central theme of this Daya Satakam verse is the elevated boon conferred upon even an atheist, who by some dint of good fortune arrives at the vicinity of the Venkatam hill, and due to the grace of Daya Devi utters the words "svAmin pAhi". The effort involved in coming to the Venkatam hill is considerable. Upon arrival the supplicant needs to utter the words "svAamin pAhi". How to get him to utter these words? Svami Bhashyakarar states in the SharaNAgati gadyam "dvayavaktA tvam kevalam madIyayaIva dayayA" (Those uttering the dvaya mantram are assured of the Lord's grace). How to make one utter the dvaya mantram? This too requires the anugraham of Daya Devi. Daya Devi magically ensures that some janmAntara sukR^itam (good karma from some past birth)

prevails and instructs the supplicant to utter the word "svAmin pAhi", Once this act is performed, the tribute "avasha vachane" comes into force. Namely, being totally unaware of the fact that Lord Srinivasa, who is the object of adoration for the nitya sUris, who is worshipped by Brahma and Rudra, and who gave up residence in Sri Vaikuntam and took root at the Venkatam hill, entirely for the sake of gracing beings on this earth, if one by happenstance utters the words "svAmin pAhi", he becomes privy to the limitless grace of Lord Srinivasa. For example, one may encounter in dreams good and bad things. What one utters during those dreams is only known to one experiencing the dream and no one else. In that process one may exclaim "I behold a snake". Even due to one such occurrence if the individual, who is totally ignorant of the greatness of Lord Srinivasa, utters the words "svAmin pAhi" he becomes privy to the Lord's blessings. This is illustrated in the ViShNu purANam and SrImad BhAgavatam through the life story of ajAmiLa. AjamiLa, who had sinned greatly, uttered the name Narayana while taking his last breath and that too not thinking of the Lord but by way of calling his son. However, this was treated by the Lord as an appeal, and he immediately came to the aid of Ajamila by keeping him out of bounds from Yama. In fact, Yama remarks about the magnitude of these sins while elaborating to his assistants through an instruction whispered in their ears "vadati yamaH kila tasya karNamUle parihara madhusUdanaM prapannAn prabhurahamasmi nR^iNAM na vaiShNavAnAm". Namely "I am recognized as Yama the Lord of death. Everybody lives in the knowledge that they cannot escape my noose. Therefore, I am Prabhu (Lord) for these beings. However, for those who have performed Saranagati to Lord Narayana, I am not Prabhu. Understand this instruction carefully." Normally one does not admit to one's deficiencies in the open. In keeping with this dictum, Yama whispers in the ears of his attendants, his lack of Lordship over Saranagatas. Thus, it is established that one who has performed saranagati to Lord Narayana, is freed from the clutches of Yama. The same puranic message is conveyed by Tirumazhisai Azhvar in NAnmukan tiruvantAti (pAsuram 68) "tiRampElmin kaNDIr tiruvaDi tan nAmam maRantum puRam tozhA mAntar iRainciyum cAtuvaRai pOtuminkaL enRAn namanum tan tUtuvarai kUvi cevikku". It is instructive to observe the Azhvar reproduce verbatim in Tamil using the same words from the puraNAs. The Azhvar goes a step further than the Maharishis that authored the PuraNAms in that Yama instructs his attendants "If you encounter one that has performed saranagati to Lord Narayana, salute them respectfully by prostrating at their feet and then stay away from them." Svami Desikan's tribute "svAmin pAhItyavasha vachane" in this Daya Satakam verse, mirrors the message of the Azhvar to reflect the fact that the



SrI Alamelumanga tAyAr garuDa sevai

involuntary utterance of the words "svAmin pAhi" is sufficient to invoke the grace of Lord Srinivasa and keep the attendants of Yama at bay. This raises the question "does one have to utter those words while breathing their last at the Venkatam hill. Would the Lord not protect one who breathes his last in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill?" This is answered by Svami Desikan through the statement "rakShApekShAm pratIkShate", which is goptrutva varaNam, one of the angAs (limbs) of sharaNAgati. Lord Srinivasa expects this of a supplicant. This can be in the form of an appeal through speech or mAnasikam (through thought). If such an appeal is submitted, the Lord always graces the supplicant. In Kanchipuram there lived a Svamin known as Turinjal Svamin. In those days there would be a number of bats inhabiting the Vahana Mantapam of the Temple. One day this Svamin was waiting for a Parayanam at the Vahana Mantapam, when a bat injured itself and landed near his feet. Realizing that the bat had only a few more moments to live and appreciating its plight, this Svamin performed sharaNAgti for the bat. His line of reasoning for this act was "The injured bat could have landed anywhere. However, it landed near my feet and hence I am bound to protect the bat." The very act of falling near the feet of this Svamin is interpreted as a statement of "svAmin pAhi". Thus, the bat became fit for sharaNAgati and hence the grace of Lord Narayana followed automatically. In Navalpakkam, there lived a great Acharya known as Ayya Devanatha Tatacharya Svamin. His compassion was such that he performed Bharanyasam for the cow and calf residing in his house. Again, his line of thought for performing sharaNAgati for them was "These animals have sought refuge in me. They should be freed from the cycle of births and deaths." Thus, the manner of "svAmin pAhi" can mean an actual utterance of the words, or a mental contemplation of this fact or any act performed by the supplicant (like falling at the feet of a great Bhagavata). This is sufficient to invoke the limitless compassion of Lord Srinivasa. This is the import of the tribute "svAmin pAhItyavasha vachane vindati svApamantyam" (namely one who breathes his last in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill uttering the word "svAmi pAhi". The prayogam in this verse is quite extraordinary in that instead of using the term maraNam (death), Svami Desikan employs the term "antyam svApam" (final sleep from which there is no waking up). The term "maraNam" is jarring and disliked universally. However, here Svami Desikan is instructing us in an important puruShArtha, namely begetting paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. The usage of "maraNam" takes away from the elevated nature of this puruShArtha. Hence Svami Desikan exhibits his skill as Kavi-tArkika-simham through the description "svApam antyam". Sleep is something that is desired no matter what time of the day or night. One may be in the middle of an

upanyasam and doze off for example or when one is reading a book. Therefore, the term "svApam" denoting sleep is a term that is acceptable to all. Hence Svami Desikan conveys an important message through the usage "antyam svApam vindati" namely when one who arrives in the vicinity of the Venkatam Hill, submits the appeal "svAmin pAhi" as outlined previously and goes to sleep from which there is no waking up, the individual is assured of paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. It must be observed that Svami Desikan follows the lead of Maharishi Valmiki in this instance. This can be understood by examining an instance from the SrImad RAmAyaNam. Upon Lord Rama's departure to the forest, Dasaratha breathes his last. Word of this grave happening (without explicit mention of Dasaratha's demise) is conveyed to Bharata, who returns to Ayodhya from his maternal uncle's home. Now Kaikeyi needed to convey the news of Dasaratha's demise to Bharata. As he arrives, Bharata observes that all citizens of Ayodhya have their heads bent in sorrow and avoid looking at him contrary to the practice of citizens welcoming their prince. Bharata puzzled by this unusual occurrence arrives at the palace of Dasaratha only to find it empty. Seeing this, he resolves that King Dasaratha is extremely fond of his mother Kaikeyi and perhaps would be in her palace. Accordingly, he proceeds to see his mother. There too there is no sign of King Dasaratha. Bharata thinks his father may be resting. He beholds Kaikeyi sitting on the bed but no trace of Dasaratha. He enquires "shUnyo(a)yam shayanIyaste parya~nko hema bhUShitaH? (This golden bed seems empty without Dasaratha. How is it that you are seated here alone?)." Without answering this directly, Kaikeyi enquires of Bharata as to when he embarked on his return to Ayodhya and if he encountered any troubles during his travel and whether all is well with his maternal uncle and maternal grandfather. Bharata responds that all is well with the maternal uncle and maternal grandfather but asks Kaikeyi why she did not answer his question. Very casually she responds "yA gati sarvabhUtAnAM tAM gatiM te pitA gataH rAjA mahAtma tejasvi yAyajUkaH satAM gatiH" (That state which everyone begets at one time in life was attained by the King, who is extremely radiant, a dharmAtma (follower of Dharma), who had performed numerous yagams. Therefore, he has attained an elevated state. Do not worry). This is in keeping with the Bhagavadgita declaration "jAtasyahi dhR^ivo mR^ityuH" (everyone that is born is bound to die). The usage by Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse is very similar to the prayogam of Valmiki Maharishi in that without explicitly mentioning death he alludes to the elevated state attained by Dasaratha through the words of Kaikeyi. Next, the tribute "devaH shrImAn" from this verse is examined. This refers to Lord Srinivasa, who is never separated from Thayar and affords protection. The

next tribute “dishati karuNe dR^iShTi michChaM stvadIyAm” from this Daya Satakam verse highlights the fact that Lord accepts the supplicant’s appeal in the manner of “angIkaram” (embrace) and assures him of paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. How this comes about and in what manner the angikaram takes place is discussed in this tribute. In order to gain the good graces of an elevated person, one needs to approach them at an opportune time. If the opportune time is made use of properly, one can be assured of being privy to the individual’s good books. In this context, Lord Srinivasa is constantly seeking an opportunity to get in the good books of Daya Devi. The opportune moment is when He rescues someone that arrives at the Venkatam hill submitting the appeal “svAmin pAhi” and breathes his last. This gives Daya Devi immense pleasure, and She casts Her benign eye-glances on the Lord. Therefore, Lord Srinivasa gladly performs this act of angikaram. The import of “tvadIyAm dR^iShTi michChaM” becomes apparent. That is Lord Srinivasa Himself, desires the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi and is therefore willing to go to any extent to ensure that He gets this. Therefore, He resolves to protect the supplicant. We seek the kaTAkSham (compassionate eye-glances) of Lord Narayana and Thayar for our upliftment. However, the Lord seeks the KaTAkSham of Daya Devi! The glory of Bhagavad KaTAkSham is highlighted in the next verse.



Thayar’s KaTAkSham is highlighted in the GuNaratna Kosham by way of a glorification “Brahma, Rudra, and Indra beget their elevated status by being privy for a moment to the compassionate eyeglances of Thayar. However, Her eyeglances are constantly falling upon Lord Narayana. Therefore, He became para Brahman!” Thus, all of us seek the KaTAkSham of Thayar. She bestows Her kaTAkSham constantly on Lord Narayana. He seeks the compassionate eyeglances of Daya Devi. The next tribute from this Daya Satakam verse “shruti pariShadAM uttareNAbhi mukhyam dishati” extols the fact that one who breathes his last in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill in the aforesaid manner gets importance. The Lord turns towards the supplicant and assures him of protection by uttering praNavam. This is the angikaram that is highlighted through the statement “abhi mukyam dishati” from this verse. It would be sufficient for Lord Srinivasa to merely state “I

shall protect you". Where is the need for the majestic usage "udghAtena shruti pariShadAM uttareNAbhi mukhyam"? The inner meaning is that once the Lord utters praNavam it is His binding promise that He will come to the rescue of the supplicant. The Azhvar tribute to Lord Srinivasa "nAnmaRaikaL tEDiyOtum selvanAka iruntu" reflects the fact that the four vedas offer their tributes to Lord Srinivasa. The root of all the Vedas is the PraNavam. The utterance of PraNavam is indicative of the pramANyam of all the Rks contained in the four Vedas. Therefore, the Lord's utterance of PraNavam is equivalent to a solemn oath attesting to the authenticity of all the Vedam Rks and an unmistakable promise that this is the truth based upon which He offers protection. The Lord is known as satya sankalpa - that is one who wills the truth. Therefore, if Lord Srinivasa assures one of His protection, even if Mahalakshmi Thayar draws up a litany of complaints pertaining to the sins committed by the supplicant, He will never swerve from His promise. This is also reflected in the Azhvar tribute "en aDiyAr atu ceiyAr ceitArEl nanRu ceitAr" (My sharaNAgatAs will not act in that sinful manner. Even if they apparently did this only good will come out of it. Therefore, do not intervene to alter My sankalpam. Hence, the Lord never forsakes those who have surrendered to Him.) In the AdhikaraNa sArAvaLi, which is a commentary on Sri Bhashyam of Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Desikan declares "satyaIkAlambi bhAShyam yatipati kathitam" (this Bhashyam known as Sri Bhashyam exposits only the truth and is replete with contemplation of the truth). satya avalambanam denotes the absolute conformance (without deviation of any kind) with the truth. This is a direct refutation of other doctrines which exposit "what we behold, what we experience and the world we live in are unreal (untruth). The only truth is Brahman. Some other doctrines declare that reality prevails only for a time but due to changes is replaced by something that is unreal. The satya avalambanam is a refutation of these doctrines too." Thus, on this basis of satya avalambanam, Svami Bhashyakarar established the correct position of the Vedas that everything is real including one's dreams. In a like manner, Bhagavad Sankalpam is apratihatam (that which cannot be altered by anyone). Therefore, the Lord's utterance of PraNavam is an affirmation of His sworn position of protecting those who come to the vicinity of the Venkatam hill and submit the appeal "svAmin pAhi" and breathe their last. In the exposition on verse 37, the grace of Lord Srinivasa for ordinary beings who take residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill on some pretext or the other was illustrated. Why is the apparently similar message being repeated here is a possible question that arises. A distinct feature of Svami Desikan's works is the avoidance of punarukti (repeating a previously covered theme). There is a difference between

the purport of verse 37 and this verse. Verse 37 is intended to extol Daya Devi's help to those who seek residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill on some pretext or another. However, this verse is intended for one who has no such desire but yet by dint of some good Karma happens to arrive in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill and breathes his last upon submitting the appeal "svAmin pAhi". One may undertake kShetra vAsam - residence in a punya kshetram like the Venkatam hill. However, the indriyas (senses) still hold sway and can cause the individual to engage in forbidden acts in accordance with the statement "duShTendriya vashAt cittam nR^iNyAn yat kalmashet vittham tadantakAle samsiddhim yAti nArAyaNAlaye". The mind becomes a slave to the senses and as result is forced to engage in actions that are forbidden by the sastras. Even if this be so, the residence at the Venkatam hill ensures that manaH shuddhi will come about eventually. This is the import for verse 37. On the other hand, this verse goes a step further in that it is not even necessary to take residence in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill. Even a cursory visit without any aspirations undertaken with the utterance "svAmin pAhi" prior to taking one's last breath in the vicinity of the Venkatam hill assures the individual of the elevated benefit of paripUrNa brahma anubhavam."

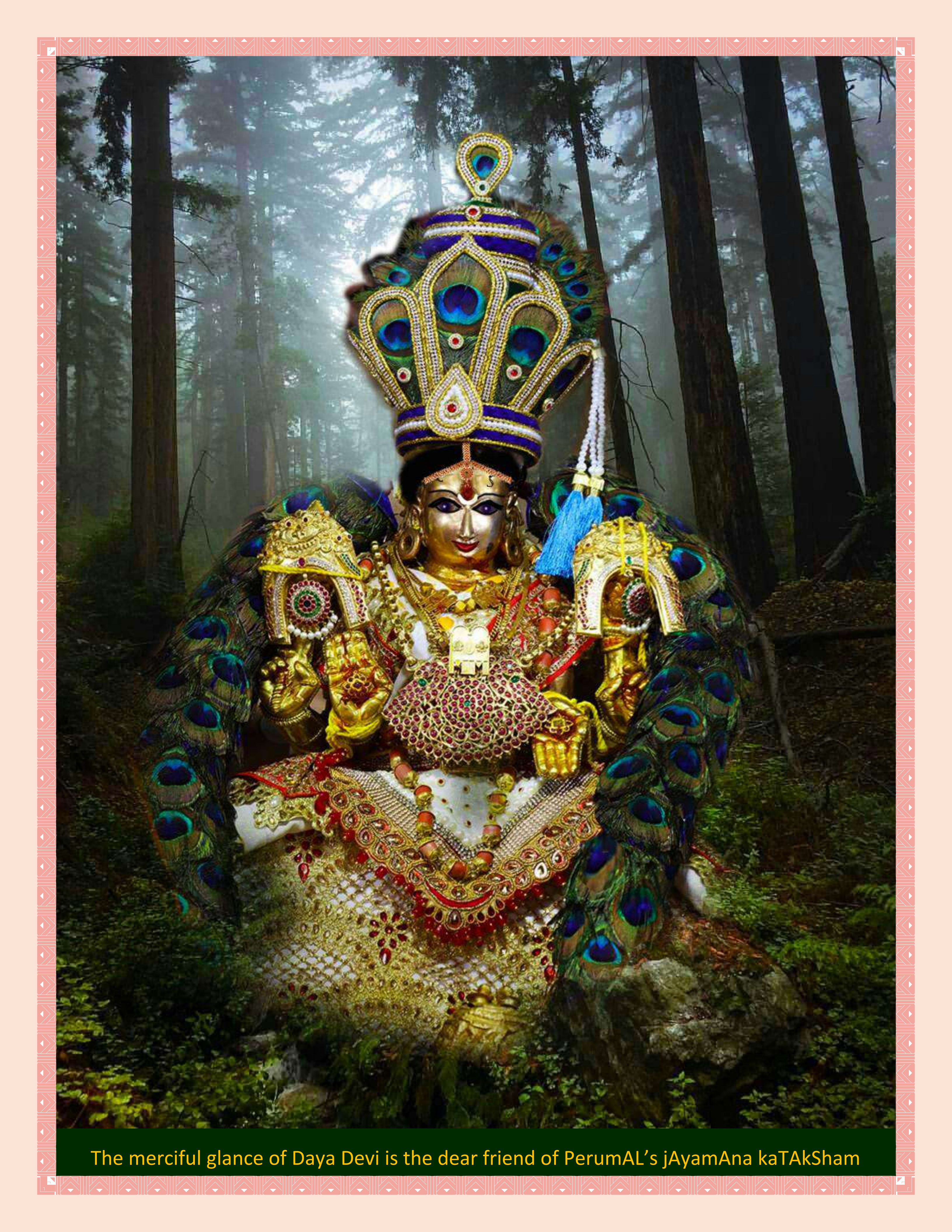
We next quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

A sentient being can by mere accident happen to breathe his last in the precincts of Tirumalai. By sheer pursuit of some accidental puNya deed he could utter a few words of prayer to the effect "Oh Lord! Please save me" This could be a spontaneous, unconscious, undesigned request. What happens then? Lord Srinivasa, to act as per Your prompting, oh Daya Devi! responds with a monosyllable answer - praNavam, which is an affirmative assent. It is a clear assent. The reply from Lord Srinivasa is the basis of all Vedas. Hence the Lord's response has Vedic authority, and it would be reassuring to all of us.

1. The enormity of Daya Devi's help to all of us needs to be appreciated. Of course, Daya Devi would do so only if we have secured Her acceptance. The verse and Daya Devi's overwhelming, ready consent do not imply sarva-mukti-prasanga, namely deliverance to all.

2. Daya ought to relent in our case. We ought to have done something towards this. The implication is upaya anushtanam. That makes the being to be in Tirumalai at the time of breathing his last. It also makes him utter an SOS cry in the nick of time.

3. Other theories and conjectures are beyond our comprehension. Therefore, we must implicitly believe the words of great seers.



The merciful glance of Daya Devi is the dear friend of PerumAL’s jAyamAna kaTAkSham

Slokam 49

श्रेयःसूतिं सकृदपि दये सम्मतां यः सखीं ते

शीतोदारामलभत जनः श्रीनिवासस्य दृष्टिम् ।

देवादीनामयमनृणतां देहवत्त्वेऽपि विन्दन्

बन्धान् मुक्तो बलिभिरनघैः पूर्यते तत्प्रयुक्तैः ॥ ४९ ॥

shreyaH sUtiM sakR^idapi daye sammatAM yaH sakhIM te

shItodArAmalabhata janaH shrInivAsasya dR^iShTim|

devAdInAmayamanR^iNatAM dehavattve(a)pi vindan

bandhAn mukto balibhiranaghaiH pUryate tatprayuktaiH||49



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "The previous verse illustrated the help rendered by Daya Devi to one who breathes his last at the vicinity of the Venkatam hill while uttering the prayer "svAmin pAhI". This leads to the question: Does it have to be this way? As a matter of fact, one never knows what is in store in the future and how one's life would be towards the end of their earthly sojourn. What about the remaining beings of the universe? Would they not be privy to the anugraham of Daya Devi? Svami Desikan addresses these issues in this verse:

"shreyaH sUtiM sakR^idapi daye sammatAM yaH sakhIM te shItodArAmalabhata janaH shrInivAsasya dR^iShTim devAdInAmayamanR^iNatAM dehavattve(a)pi vindan bandhAn mukto balibhiranaghaiH pUryate tatprayuktaiH"

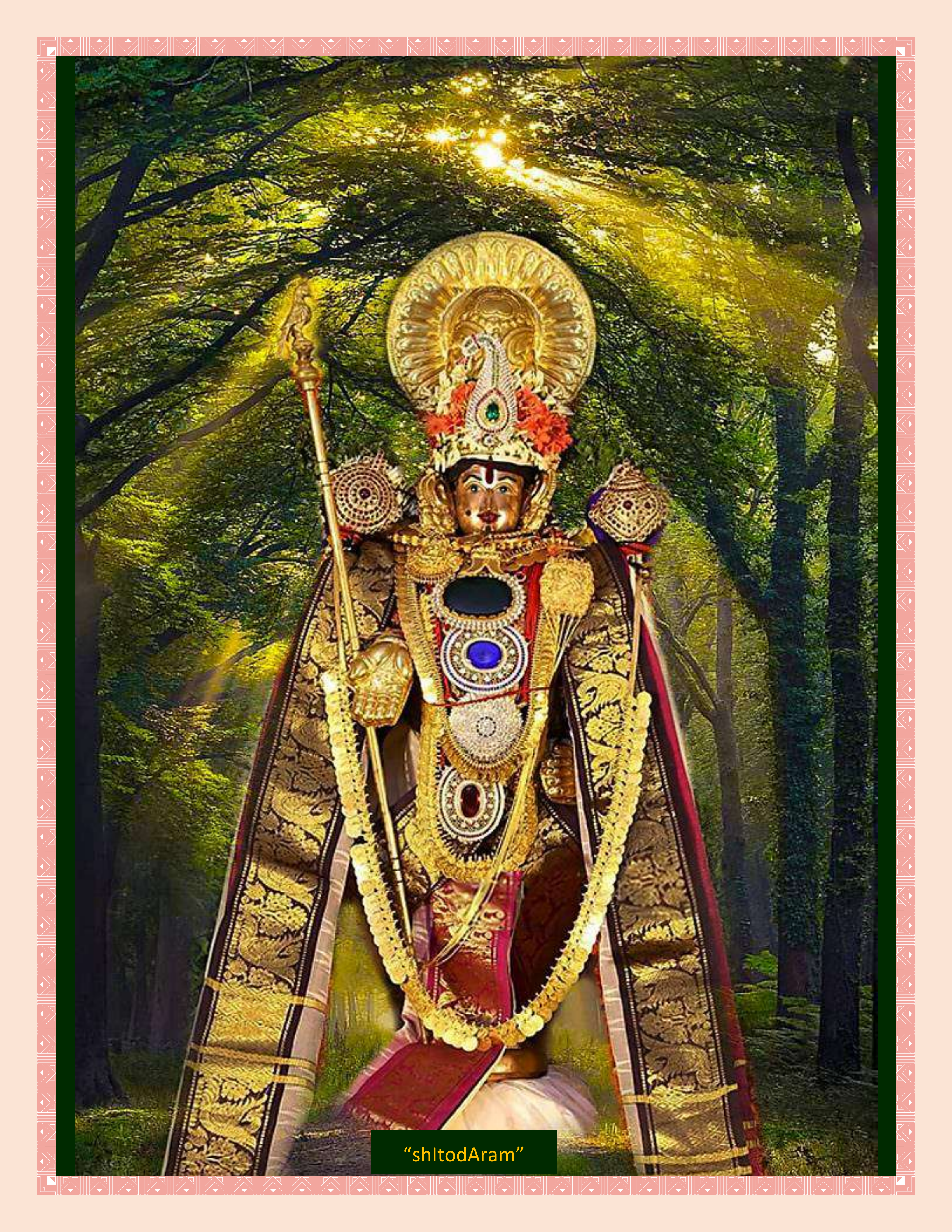
Specifically, Svami Desikan addresses the grace of Daya Devi for those who are blessed with jAyamAna kaTAkSham (kataksham of Lord Srinivasa at birth) of Lord Srinivasa. The uniqueness of this slokam comes about due to the portrayal of Lord Srinivasa's dR^iShTiH (compassionate eyeglances) as the friend of Daya Devi. First and foremost, it is observed that the term dR^iShTiH and Daya Devi are both "strI linga shabdas" (belonging to the feminine gender). Their relationship is glorified here. At birth one can be privy to the kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana, Brahma, or Rudra. Their subsequent living will be in accordance with the kaTAkShams that they received at birth.

"sadAcAryAs bless us with sharaNAgati"
SrImad ParavakOTTai PeriyANDavan

One receiving the kaTAkSham of Rudra becomes tAmasa prakR^iti due to Rudra being associated with tamo guNam. [It must be noted here that this is in the manner of the nahi-nindA nyAyam. In the performance of all Vaidhika rituals, when the name Rudra arises, it is followed by apaupaspR^ishya (sprinkling of water to cleanse one's hands from the tamo guNam associated with Rudran.) Those who receive the kaTAkSham of Brahma at birth engage in rAjasa prakR^iti. They will constantly be seeking wealth even though they do not go to extremes in this pursuit. Those blessed with the kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana at birth have sAtvika prakR^iti. In accordance with the puranic statement "jAyamAnam hi puruSham yam pashyet madhusUdhanaH sAtvikaH sa tu vij~neyaH sa vai mokShArtha cintakaH", one who is graced with the kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana at birth will be of sAtvika disposition, knowing the prescriptions of sAtvika conduct. Only such a person is engaged in contemplation of mokSham. To gain the very thought of mokSham it becomes imperative to have the kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana at birth. Thus, we could as a matter of pride declare that due to the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana, we have been blessed with sharaNAgati through a sadAchArya. Those among us who have not received sharaNAgati would be motivated to receive this from a sadAchArya as a consequence of the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana. Thus, when one is blessed with this kaTAkSham, one must use the anugraham properly and not be led astray. Otherwise, it would be an opportunity wasted. The previous verse declared that Lord Srinivasa is willing to do anything to gain the compassionate eyeglances of Daya Devi. Here, the anugraham of Srinivasa to those blessed with jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Narayana is expounded upon. Svami Desikan cautions us that this benefit needs to be used properly in that one needs to seek the upAyam of sharaNAgati at the earliest possible time lest it turns out to be an opportunity missed.

In this verse, the compassionate eyeglances of Lord Srinivasa (dR^iShTi or kaTAkSham) is eulogized as a sakhi (friend) of Daya Devi. Here it may be asked what "dR^iShTi" is being alluded to? Is it the casual sight of Lord Srinivasa or does it pertain to something else? Among the qualities of Lord Srinivasa is "daNDadharatvam" namely meting out the consequences in accordance with good and bad karma. Each sentient being in the universe is well aware of the good and bad actions they undertake. Thus, when one encounters an adverse happening, it is quite common to think "I visited numerous temples at various times and offered salutations to the Lord. Still why am I being punished?" However, when asked what are the good acts that the individual has performed, it may be hard to think of and enumerate them. Thus, in such an instance, if the Lord has to dispense consequences in accordance with the individual's karma, the individual would forever be steeped in sorrow due the results from the bad karma. Is this not a consequence of Bhagavad KaTAkSham or SrinivAsa dR^iShTi? Svami Desikan emphatically answers this in the negative through the declaration that this dR^iShTi can never be a friend of Daya Devi due to the fact that nigraham is a word that does not exist in Daya Devi's dictionary. This is understood from the tribute "shreyaH sUtim" of this verse, namely only the dR^iShTi of Lord Srinivasa which results in elevation for the individual who is privy to His gaze, is the friend of Daya Devi. Next it may be asked what is meant by shreyas? shreyas denotes that which is for one's well-being (hitam). If this is the case, does this denote accrual of large amounts of wealth or excelling in studies resulting in academic accomplishments, or being blessed with long life, or being blessed with good health or all of these combined? Above these things does hitam denote Bhagavad Kaimkaryam or paripUrNa brahma anubhavam? Does "shreyaH sUtim" in this context denote everything good arising for an individual which comes about on account of Lord Srinivasa's compassionate eyeglances? Svami Desikan answers this by observing that "shreyaH sUtim" here denotes the indestructible shreyas, namely that which is lasting and permanent. It is not the granting of trivial benefits that last for a time. Instead, it denotes the benefit of eternal kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple upon begetting moksham. The paripurNa brahma anubhavam that arises in this as a result is known as shrI. This is understood from the Ramayanam salutation "lakShmaNo lakShmi sampannaH" Elsewhere in the Ramayana, Vibhishana is glorified as "antarikSha gataH shrIman" to denote his acquisition of Sri while airborne and seeking the grace of Lord Rama. How could LakShmaNa beget the title "lakShmi sampannaH" and that too while proceeding to the forest along with Lord Rama and Sita Piratti leaving behind all wealth? This is to be understood from the fact that LakShmaNa was

blessed with the right of exclusive kaimkaryam to Lord Rama and Sita. This Kaimkarya Sri is pradhAnam (foremost). In the case of Vibhishana too, he was leaving behind his family and wealth in Lanka to seek refuge at Lord Rama's feet as evidenced by the Ramayanam tribute "tyaktvA puttrAmshca dhArAmshca rAghavam sharaNam gataH" How then could he be deemed to be Sriman? The Sri again in this case is the Kaimkarya Sri for Lord Rama. Thus, "shreyaH sUtim" is to be understood as the reference to nitya kaimkarya Sri. This results from the dR^iShTi of Lord Srinivasa. The manner of the Srinivasa dR^iShTi is glorified next through the tribute "shItodAram", which denotes that the dR^iShTi of Lord Srinivasa is cool and benevolent. In the SrI DevanAyaka PancAshat Svami Desikan salutes the compassionate eyeglances of Lord DevanAyaka through the tribue "ArdrIbhavAmyamR^itavarSha nibhaIrapA~NgaIH" to reflect the fact that receiving the eyeglances of Lord Devanayaka is akin to a shower of amR^itam (elixir). In the context of the Daya Satakam tribute of this verse it denotes the fact that Lord Srinivasa confers upon us much more benefit than we deserve. The reference here is to the fact that a mere utterance of the prayer "svAmin pAhI" results in the enormous benefit of paripurNa brahma anubhavam, which even great Maharishis have not been able to obtain. This is made possible by the dR^iShTi of Lord Srinivasa. The tribute "te sammatAM sakhIM" from this verse denotes the fact that this dR^iShTi of Lord Srinivasa is a bosom friend of Daya Devi. Next the tribute "shItodArAm shrInivAsasya dR^iShTim janaH alabhata sakR^idapi" is examined. This denotes the fact that one who receives the compassionate eye glances of Lord Srinivasa for once at birth, namely jAyamAna kaTAkSham, is assured of the elevated benefit of Kaimkarya Sri and paripUrNa brahma anubhavam. The tribute janaH is meant as a descriptor for a common person regardless of stature as learned, wealthy or otherwise. This could apply to one engaged in sweeping away the dirt from the precincts of the shrine of Lord Srinivasa - great indeed is the bhAgyam of one who renders this service. Even though they may be engaged in this act for their livelihood, their service at the Shrine of Lord Srinivasa is noteworthy. Thus, the term janaH in the tribute "sakR^idapi alabhata janaH" is indicative of one who receives the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa and makes no distinction on the basis of caste, creed, gender, affiliation, wealth, or erudition. The tribute "dehavattve(a)pi" denotes one possessed of their body in their current state. Everyone, that arrives in the world with a human body comes with debt. Every Brahmana is born with debt according to the Vedam statement "jAyamAno vai brAhmaNaH tribhir R^iNavA jAyate brahmacaryeNa R^iShibhyo yaj~nena devabhyaH prajayA pitR^ibhyaH" (Taittiriya Samhita: 6.3.10.5).


"shItodAram"

It is not just one but three kinds of debt. These are the debts to the Rishis, Devas, and Pitrus. Discharging these debts is impossible in one's entire lifetime. How are these debts discharged? "brahmacaryeNa R^iShibhyaH" instructs us in the fact that the debt to rishis is discharged by performing Veda adhyayanam. The debt to the Devas is discharged by the offering of havis in yaj~nams in accordance with the instruction "yaj~nena devabhyaH ". Finally, the debt to one's ancestors (pitrus) is discharged by begetting progeny for undertaking tarpanams and shradhams in keeping with the instruction "prajayA pitR^ibhyaH". This is the means for absolving oneself from the three kinds of debt that one is born with. Svami Desikan notes in this Daya Satakam verse that one who receives the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa, is relieved of these three kinds of debt while in the present body. The Srimad Bhagavatam declaration "devaR^iShi bhUtApta nR^iNAM pitR^iNAM na ki~Nkaro nAyamR^iNI ca rAjan sarvAtmanA yaH sharaNaM sharaNyaM nArAyaNe loka guruM prayantaH" states that those who perform surrender at the feet of Lord Narayana, the Acharya for the entire universe, are relieved of the debts to rishis, devas, and ancestors, while in their mortal body. Svami Desikan conveys this puranam message in this verse through the tribute "dehavattve(a)pi ayaM anR^iNatAM vindan". The irony is that while Lord Srinivasa relieves us of our debt to the Devas, Rishis, and Pitrus, He is constantly engaged in debt repayment to Kubera, which was incurred at the time of His marriage to Padmavati Thayar. Even now all the money received is only covering the interest payment, while the principal amount remains intact without dent. Thus Lord Srinivasa, who is nitya shrI, is forever indebted to Kubera! However, the important thing to note is that despite being steeped in debt, Lord Srinivasa readily comes to our succor and relieves us of our debt. As a consequence, we become "bandhAn muktaH" as described by Svami Desikan in this verse, namely we become freed from all debt of karma with this bodily existence itself. Next the anvaya kramam (prose order) of the salutation from this verse "tatprayuktaiH balibhiH anaghaiH pUryate" reveals that those who receive the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa and perform sharaNAgati at His feet are offered upacharams by devas of the various lokas traversed by the Atma during its sojourn to SrI Vaikuntam. During their residence on earth, these beings offered by way of havis during yaj~nams various upacharams to devatas. However, now during their sojourn to Sri Vaikuntam through the archirAdi margam, the devatas offer upacharams like arghyam, pAdyam, and Achamanam to the liberated jIvan in keeping with the Upanishad tribute "sarvesmai deva balimAvahanti". The Upanishad statement is reproduced almost verbatim by Svami Desikan in the eulogy "balibhiranaghaiH pUryate



"sharaNaM sharaNyaM nArAyaNe loka guruM"

tatprayuktaiH”. This role reversal namely, the jIvan offering upacharams through yAgams to Devatas, now receiving upacharams from the very same Devatas during their sojourn to Sri Vaikuntam, is made possible due to the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa, which is a bosom friend of Daya Devi. The very fact that aDiyEn is rendering this upanyasam and the message is being heard by a number of people is indicative of the fact that all of us are privy to the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa. Without this there would be no upanyasam nor would we entertain thoughts of moksham. Thus, when presented with this rare gift of the jAyamAna kaTAkSham, the opportunity must not be wasted. One must seek the constant grace of Daya Devi. Thus, we conclude this verse seeking the blessings of the jAyamAna kaTAkSham of Lord Srinivasa, the compassionate eyeglances of Svami Desikan and Daya Devi.”

Next we quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin: “The highly blessed state of Moksha, is vouchsafed to one who is a recipient of Daya Devi’s friend-in-action, the eye-glance of Srinivasa. This is designated as jAyamAna kaTAkSham is to be had only once in one’s life. When it is conferred at birth, the life is singularly divine in nature.

It is only a matter of time. If he accomplishes Prapatti, he gains moksham in the same birth. Or else, he will reach the fit state for deliverance through Prapatti in a certain birth. The term bandhAn muktaH attests to the validity for any birth - not necessarily the final birth. Anyway, when he is on his path to the Lord’s abode, he is served with great honors and upacharas by devas because he is freed from his debts to the Devas, Rishis, and Pitrus. The Sastras state that anyone born herein owes three kinds of debt - to the Devas to be cleared by performance of yagams, to the Rishis to be cleared by undertaking Veda adhyayanam and to the Pitrus (ancestors) to be cleared by begetting progeny for the purpose of performing tarpanams and shraddhams.”



Slokam 50

दिव्यापाङ्गं दिशसि करुणे येषु सद्देशिकात्मा

क्षिप्रं प्राप्ता वृषगिरि पतिं क्षत्रबन्ध्वादयस्ते ।

विश्वाचार्या विधि शिव मुखाः स्वाधिकारोपरुद्धाः

मन्ये माता जड इव सुते वत्सला मादृशे त्वम् ॥ ५० ॥

divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe yeShu saddeshikAtmA

kShipraM prAptA vR^iShagiri patiM kShatrabandhvAdayaste|

vishvAchAryA vidhi shiva mukhAH svAdhikAroparuddhAH

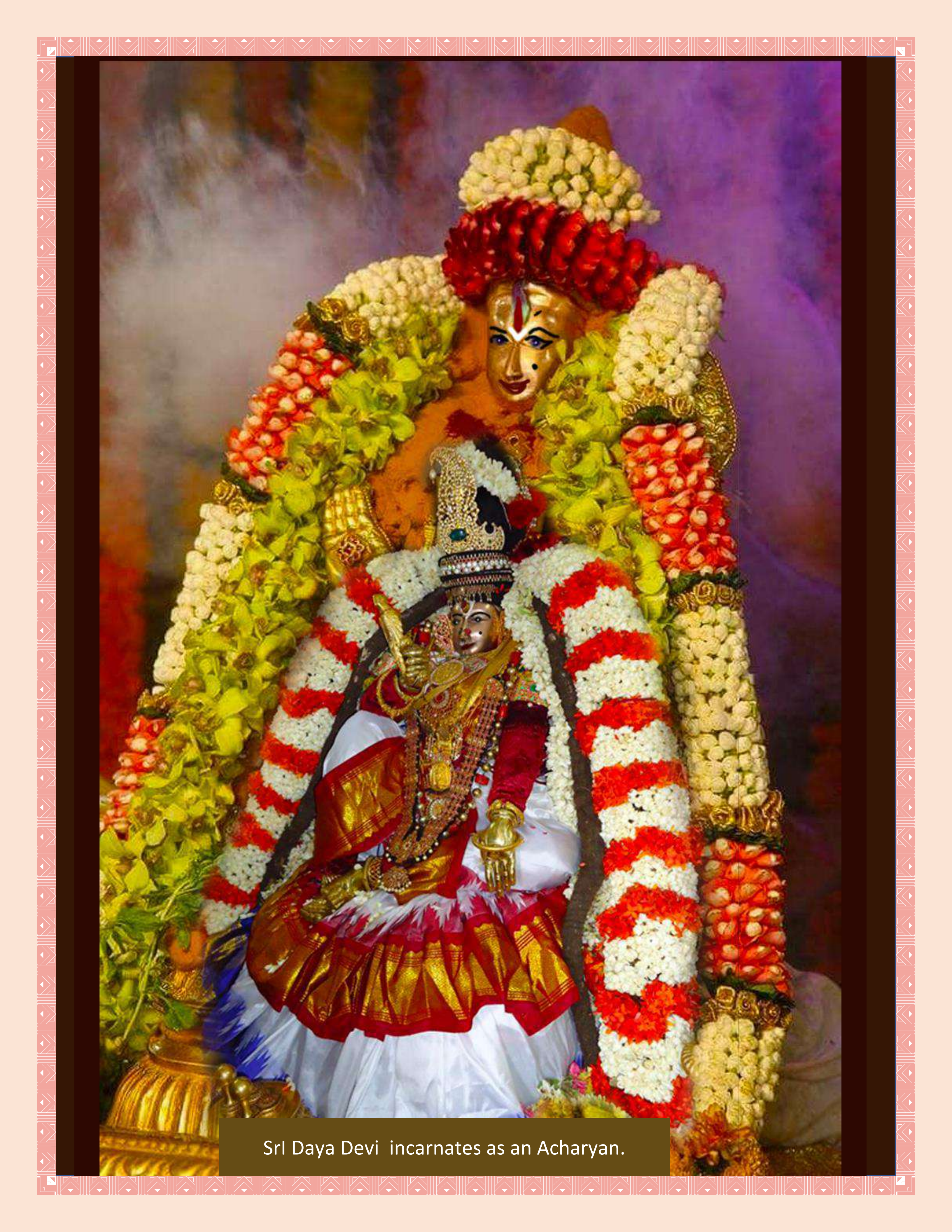
manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^ishe tvam || 50





We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "The previous verse highlighted the benefit of receiving the Jayamana kataskham of Lord Srinivasa, which is a bosom friend of Daya Devi. In particular, it was pointed out that this kataksham of Lord Srinivasa is entirely for upliftment of an individual. Not only that, it also absolves the individual of the three kinds of debt, which are hard to discharge and frees them from karma. Furthermore, it was noted that if one receives this kataksham at birth, that individual alone can attain moksham as a consequence of performing saranagati. This verse is: divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe yeShu saddeshikAtmA kShipraM prAptA vR^iShagiri patiM kShatrabandhvAdayaste vishvAchAryA vidhi shiva mukhAH svAdhikAroparuddhAH manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^ishe tvam. From a collection of gems, where it is impossible to make the distinction of one gem being

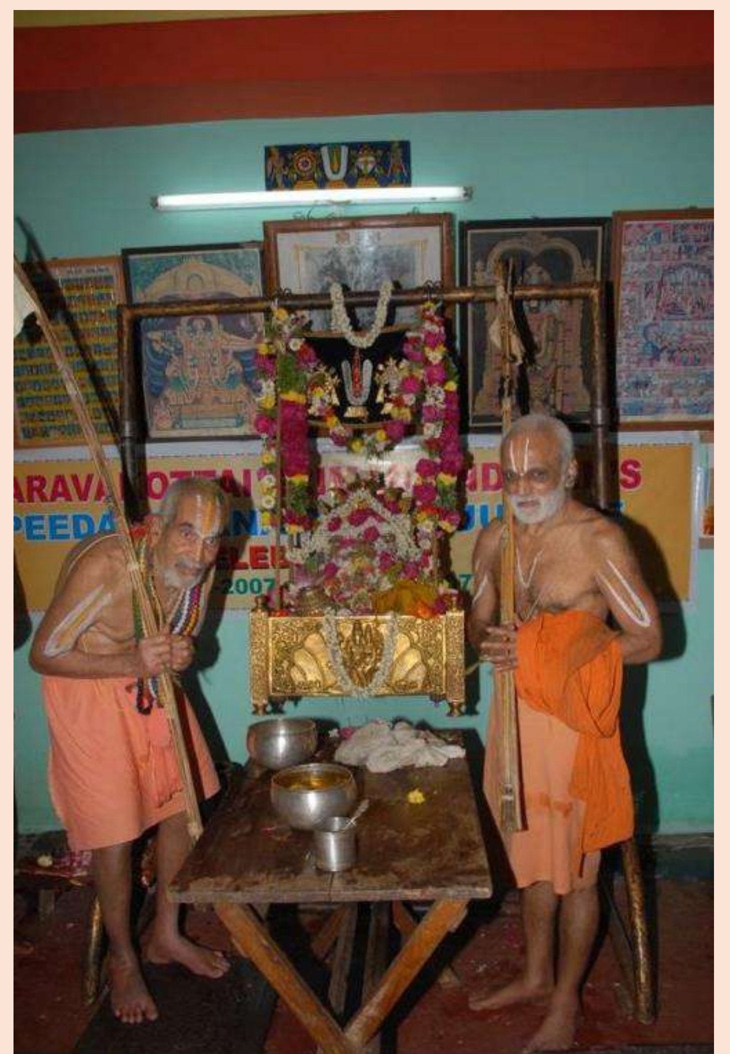
superior to another, various people make selections of particular gems suited for their needs. In a like manner, it is impossible to say which slokam of Svami Desikan is the best. This slokam describes the state of mandhamatis (dim-witted ones) and mUDAs (fools) and the anugraham of Daya Devi for such beings. Who can be included in this class of beings is a matter for another discussion! Therefore, adiyen refrains from generalizing this class of beings to include others and restricts this categorization to himself. However, the visesham of beings belonging to this class will be described towards the end of the verse. [The day prior to rendering the upanyasam for this slokam, Sri Svamin visited Navalpakkam to see his revered father, Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramanuja Tatacharya Svamin. At that time, his revered father enquired if the Daya Satakam upanyasam series had concluded. Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin answered not yet. To this, his father asked "which verse are you going to cover?" The answer was "divyA pAngam" to which Sri. Valayapettai Ramanuja Tatacharya Svamin remarked, "This is a beautiful slokam. It is meant only for people like us."] This verse contains the quintessence of the Sri Vaishnava sampradayam. Svami Desikan declares here that due to our nescience it is not inappropriate to call ourselves foolish or dim-witted. This yields great benefit as shall be seen later. The Lord is supported or motivated by Daya Devi in all His actions. However, some tasks that are beyond the reach of Lord Srinivasa are made possible by Daya Devi. This verse glorifies Daya Devi, who incarnates as an Acharyan. The resulting benefits from receiving the compassionate eye-glance of the Acharyan is highlighted here. In the Subhashitha Nivi, Svvami Desikan extols the loftiness of the grace conferred by a single eyeglance of an Acharyan. Specifically Svami Desikan states "The grace conferred by an Acharyan looking at one through the corner of one of his eyes far outweighs the combined grace resulting from the entire glances of the three-eyed one (Siva), eight-eyed one (Chaturmukha Brahma), the thousand-eyed one (Indra) and Perumal Himself." It must be noted that Lord has taken the forms of Para (in Sri Vaikuntam), vyuha murtis (in the ocean of milk), vibhava (such as Rama, Krishna, Narasimha, Vamana) and Archa murtis (such as Srinivasa on the Venkatam hill) for the singular purpose of blessing all beings in the universe. The Archa form is particularly noteworthy in that He is waiting in the manner of the declaration "rakShApekShAm pratIkShate", namely He is anxiously awaiting the arrival of beings seeking His protection. The state of beings in the universe is depicted in Svami NammAzhvar's opening verse of Tiruviruttam: "poi ninRa j~nAnamum pollA ozhukkum azhukkuDambum in ninRa nIrmai iniyAm uRAmai uyir aLippAn en ninRa yOniyumAi pirantAi imayOr talaivA meininRu kETTaruLAi aDiyEn ceiyum viNNappamE".



SrI Daya Devi incarnates as an Acharyan.

That is the Lord incarnates each time in the hope that each being of the universe will seek redemption from Him through the utterance of "svAmin pAhi" in the manner of the statement "rakShApekShAm pratikShate". In the fourth chapter of the Bhagavad Gita Lord Krishna declares "bahUnime vyatItAni janmAni tava cArjuna" where He exposits on the cause of His incarnations and the cause for birth of beings like Arjuna. Specifically, Lord Krishna states that His incarnations are due to His sankalpam, while the birth of beings like Arjuna comes about on account of Karma. In the nitya vibuti (Sri Vaikuntam) there is not much effort required on the part of the Lord. He is surrounded by nityasUris engaged in rendition of sAma gAnam (hau hau), while performing ceaseless kaimkaryam for the Divya Dampatis and thereby deriving eternal bliss. Therefore, there is not much of a role for the Lord's kalyana gunams since eternal bliss prevails for everyone. While in vyuha form reclining on the ocean of milk, he awaits the call from beings in the manner of "rakShApekShAm pratIkShate". In the avatarams of Vamana, Rama, Krishna, He comes to the earth for a specific purpose. Once the purpose is served, He returns to His eternal abode - Sri Vaikuntam, in the manner of "mission completed". For example, as Rama, He incarnated for destroying the evil Ravana and then ruled the kingdom for 11,000 years after which He returned to Sri Vaikuntam. The one important thing to note is that prior to returning to Sri Vaikuntam, He granted moksham to all animate and inanimate beings of Ayodhya and there too, when Hanuman declined the Lord's offer of moksham, He did not turn back and instead proceeded with His journey to Sri Vaikuntam. During the Vamana avataram, He graced all sentient and insentient beings of the universe with the sparsham (touch) of His blessed feet. In the Krishna avataram, He desired to come to the earth as an Acharyan and instruct all beings in the eternal truths embedded in the Vedas. Hence, He took the incarnation as gItAcharya for blessing us with the Bhagavadgita. All of these will appear in verses 82-90 of the Daya Satakam, wherein Svami Desikan notes that the main reason for these avatarams is Daya Devi. Dwelling on the Krishna avataram for a bit, the Lord incarnated for the purpose of satisfying the command "senayorubhayormadhye rathaM sthApaya" (Arjuna commanded the Lord, who was his charioteer to take the chariot to the middle of the two armies. It must be understood here that the command was in belittling manner as one would command one's chauffer. However, Lord Krishna was least perturbed by the tone of the command. Instead, He most dutifully drove the chariot to the middle of the two armies). Upon arriving at the middle of the two armies, Arjuna beholds on one side Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, Ashwathama, Shalya, and a host of others, who are related to him in some manner or the other. He then turns towards his own army

to behold his brothers, brothers-in-law and father-in-law. In the battle between the two armies, only a few will survive. The kingdom comes about as a result of the killing of so many near and dear ones. Thus, Arjuna is left wondering if this price is worth it. He further wonders if this is in keeping with Dharma. On the other hand, if he refuses to fight, he will become the laughing stock of all. His dilemma pertaining to the right and wrong of the act of killing near and dear ones needs clear answers and direction. He himself is not sure who to approach for resolving this issue. At that juncture the renowned warrior Arjuna salutes Lord Krishna and utters the prayer "kArpaNya doSho pahata svabhAvaH prucChAmi tvAM dharmasammUDhacetAH yacChreyaH syannishcitaM brUhi tan me shiShyaste(a)haM shAdhi mAM tvAM prapannam" reflecting his ignorance of what is right and what is wrong, what is dharma and what is adharma and therefore performs a formal surrender to Lord Krishna to be accepted as His disciple and that Lord Krishna alone could answer these issues satisfactorily. It may be noted here that Dharmaputra - YudhiShtira, was near-by and was well versed in matters of dharma and could have been approached with the very same questions. However, it was not so. Only Lord Krishna was sought in this instance with the thought "Lord Krishna alone can take an impartial view and resolve my dilemma". Lord Krishna blesses Arjuna and expounds on quintessential truths embedded in the Vedas through an exposition of 18 chapters. Many times, the messages would be repetitive in the sense that the Lord would cover karma yogam, j~nAna yogam, and bhakti yogam individually and then in a combined manner. Finally, the Lord concludes with the doctrine of Saranagati in the Bhagavadgita Charama slokam (Chapter 18, Verse 66). Having heard this, a natural question that arises is whether Arjuna adopted the margam of Saranagati? Did he gain moksham as a consequence? If one examines the Mahabharata epic, it only states that he attained svarga lokam and not Sri Vaikuntam at the end of his life. It is a moot point as to whether he secured moksham in a future birth. Thus, even in the Krishna avataram, after expounding upon saranagati in painstaking detail, the Lord could not impress upon Arjuna to perform saranagati. Therefore, in order to reinforce the message, just like we are born in this world, the Lord incarnates as an Acharya to redeem us. In keeping with the statement from the pAncharatra shAstram "sAkShAt nArAyaNo devaH kR^itva martya mayIM tanUM magnAn uddharate lokAn kAruNyAt shAstra pANinAH", the Lord incarnates as an Acharyan and lends His Sastram bearing hand by way of help to suffering jivans. Svami Desikan goes a step further in Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram by way of instruction to his followers pertaining to the conduct of shishyas towards Acharyas through the declaration:



The Acharya's tongue functions as the simhasanam for Lord Hayagriva

"adhyAsIna turanga vaktra vilasat jihvAgra simhAsanAt AchAryAt iha devatAM samAdhikAM anyAnamanyAmahe yasya asau bhajate kadAcit ajahat bhUmA svayam bhUmikAm magnAnAm bhavinAm bhavArNava samuttarAya nArAyaNaH". Namely, Lord Narayana incarnates to redeem suffering jivans that are being tossed hither and tither in the ocean of samsara. Specifically, replete with all His auspicious qualities, He incarnates as an Acharya. The Acharya's tongue functions as the simhasanam for Lord Hayagriva. There is no deity greater than or equal to such an Acharyan. This is certain and needs to be known. The Acharyan of such loftiness is none other than Lord Narayana incarnate! One may wonder "The meaning of the shlokam has barely been touched. The background is quite extensive. What is the reason?" The answer lies in the fact that once the background is properly understood, the meaning of the slokam becomes self-evident. No further exposition is necessary. Thus, the upadesam of Bhagavadgita from the Acharya, Lord Krishna, to Arjuna concluded. Only the two of them were privy to the knowledge that was imparted. The Lord declared in the course of His elucidation "divyaM dadAmi te chakShuH" and blessed Arjuna with the Visvarupa darsanam. This was seen by Arjuna alone and not a single other entity in the entire Pandava and Kaurava army. This is meant to illustrate the fact that the Acharya's blessings are exclusively reserved for a disciple, who sincerely seeks the anugraham of the Acharyan. Since Arjuna submitted his appeal to Krishna to be accepted as a disciple, he received the visesha anugraham of Vishvarupa darsanam.

Upon receiving the upadesam from Lord Krishna, Arjuna was ready to fight. However, at that juncture, Dharmaputra removed his armor covering and proceeded towards the Kaurava army leaving behind all his weapons in his chariot. Everyone was left wondering what was taking place and questioned the strange behavior of Yudhishtira. "tato yudhiShTiro dR^iShTvA yuddhAya susamudyate te sene sAgara prakhye muhuH pracalite nR^ipa" The sight of the two armies resembled an ocean. Yudhishtira discarded his weapons and armor in his chariot and proceeded towards the Kaurava army with bare feet as documented in the tribute "vimuchya kavachaM vIro nikShipya ca varAyudham avaruhya rathAt tUrNaM padbhyAm eva kR^itAnjaliH" It must be borne in mind that this is the emperor Yudhishtira, who is proceeding in this manner. Not only is he proceeding on bare feet, his hands are folded in the anjali mudra (pose). Next the tribute "pitAmaham abhiprekSha dharmarajo yudhiShTiraH vAgyataH prayayau yena par~Ngmukho ripuvAhinIm" reflects the fact that Yudhishtira proceeded towards his grandfather Bhishma. It may be asked if this was an act of cowardice. This is answered by Veda Vyasa in the negative through the tribute "prayayau dhIraH" to denote the fact that Yudhishtira was a great warrior. Beholding this, Bhima and Arjuna reason that even though Yudhishtira's action of proceeding towards the Kaurava army unarmed and on bare feet with folded hands seeking out Bhishma is strange it must have a valid objective and they decide to follow suit. Nakula and Sahadeva too, who are well versed with the nuances of Dharma, think that although Yudhishtira's actions are weird, it must have a definite purpose and thus, they too follow in the path of Bhima and Arjuna. Seeing this, Lord Krishna thinks, "What should I do sitting alone in the chariot, let me also accompany the Pandavas." Accordingly, He joins the Pandavas and proceeds towards Bhishma. Beholding this sight causes a great deal of amusement in the ranks of the Kaurava army, who engage in ridiculing the Pandavas on the basis of being stricken by fear at the sight of the large Kaurava army and thus they probably decided to lay down their arms. Yudhishtira is undeterred and prostrates at the feet of Bhishma. He clings to the feet of Bhishma and states "Amantraye tvAM durdharSha yotsye tAta tvayA saha anujAnIhi mAm tAta AshIShashca prayojaya" (Regrettably, I have to fight against you in this war, you who are invincible. However, please grant me permission to start the fight and bless us.). Upon hearing this, Bhishma was extremely pleased and blesses Yudhishtira with the words "prIto(a)smi putra yudhyasva jayaM Apnuhi pANDava" which meant "Oh YudhiShtira! You are well

versed in Dharma and you have acted thus. Had you not done this, you may have been condemned to defeat. However, now that you have performed this act, proceed to commence the war. You will definitely be victorious. However, short of asking me not to fight ask for anything and you shall have it." Here, Lord Krishna instructs the Pandavas with the statement "shrUyate hi purAkalpE gurUnananumAnya yaH yudhyate sa bhavedvyaktam apadhyAto mahattaraiH" to reflect the fact that "One who engages in war without the blessings of one's Acharya is bound to face defeat. Therefore, Yudhishtira's seemingly strange act was in fact well thought out as a consequence of his intimate familiarity with the rules of Dharma." Lord Krishna continues "anumAnya yathA shAstraM yastu yuddhyenmahattaraIH dhruvastasya jayo yuddhe bhavediti matir mama" (We have seen the Sastraic position in this matter. Now I present my understanding. One who commences an auspicious task upon seeking the blessings of one's Acharya is assured of victory. In this instance, the war, which would normally be a detested act, becomes an auspicious task.) It is for this reason alone that when we undertake the performance of weddings it is customary to submit the wedding invitation and seek the blessings of one's Acharya. Therefore, prior to undertaking any auspicious task, we seek the blessings of our Acharyas and thereby are assured of success. The Acharya's blessings ensure success of the task and enable an obstacle-free performance of the task. Yudhishtira, being well versed in the nuances of Dharma sets out on bare feet bereft of weapons and armor to seek the blessings of Bhishma, Drona, Kripa, and Shalya. When this is the case for obtaining a trivial worldly benefit (victory in the war), what to speak of the elevated benefit of "shreyas" arising from moksham which guarantees eternal bliss? It is imperative to have the anugraham of one's Acharya for gaining this shreyas. Therefore, Perumal



Seek the blessings of a sadAcharya

Himself incarnates as an Acharya to redeem the Saranagata. This is the fundamental import of this Daya Satakam verse. As has been exposited in an earlier verse, Svami Desikan has instructed us to discard asAram, alpasAram, and sArataram in favor of sAratamam. Therefore, his message will never dwell on trivial benefits. Instead, the focus of Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis is on the lasting and permanent benefit of moksham which bestows one with the eternal bliss arising from uninterrupted Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Svami Desikan recognizes very well that dim-witted and foolish beings will not focus on lofty ideals like Moksham. Therefore, he proceeds in a step-by-step manner in all of his stotrams by outlining the various benefits that could accrue. For example, reciting the Abhiti Sthavam enables one to overcome all fears, while reciting the Dasavatara Stotram confers the benefit of becoming world famous. Recitation of Hayagriva Stotram confers knowledge. It is the knowledge pertaining to moksham that becomes important in the context of the Daya Satakam and hence at the outset of the stotram Svami Desikan offers salutations to the elevated role of Acharyas through the tribute "vigAhe tIrtha bahuLAM shItaLAM guru santatim shrInivAsa dayAmbhodhi parIvAha paramparAm" to reflect the fact that the Ocean of Lord Srinivasa's mercy has torrential waves. As a result, one can easily get swept up by these waves. On the other hand, the Acharyas function as bathing ghats to allow for convenient descent and immersion (avagAha snAnam) in the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. The inner meaning is that Acharyas such as Svami Alavandar, Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Kuresar, and Svami Nathamuni, incarnated with the sole purpose of blessing ordinary beings with the benefit of immersion in their Sri Suktis (sacred works) so that these beings can become privy to the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. Again in verse 21, Svami Desikan depicts Lord Srinivasa as a farmer, who is delighted at beholding the bumper crop of Saranagatas, who throng in large numbers at the Venkatam hill, on account of Daya Devi causing the incarnation of Acharyas, who have established that for the well-being of the entire universe, there is no path greater than that of unconditional total surrender to His Lotus Feet. The inner meaning is that these Acharyas, through their Sri Suktis cause a large number of beings to adopt the mode of Saranagati. As a result, these beings develop strong mahAvishvAsam (unshakable faith) towards Lord Srinivasa and throng to the Venkatam hill in large numbers denoting the bumper crop, which brings great joy to Lord Srinivasa. In this context, it is helpful to recall an outpouring of the Saint Bhadrachala Ramdas, who was a great Bhakta of Lord Rama. During one time, he was imprisoned for using

funds from the king's treasury to make ornaments for Lord Rama. While in prison, he remarks "Oh Lord Rama! You and Your consort Sita Devi are resplendent with the various ornaments that adorn You. Please let me know, who arranged for You to receive these ornaments? Were these submitted by Dasaratha, or Janaka, or were they gained as strI dhanam by Your consort Sita Devi? While You and Sita Devi are shining forth, I languish in prison. Is this appropriate?" Upon hearing this, Lord Rama resolves to bless Bhadrachala Ramdas with the Dasavatara sevai, which the saint glorifies in another outpouring. Now when it comes to Lord Srinivasa, a similar question may be posed in that "is the bumper crop of Saranagatas, the result of His own efforts?" The answer to this question is a resounding no. Instead, it is entirely the doing of Acharyas declares Svami Desikan through the tribute "vR^iShashaIlesha kR^iShIvalaM dhinoti".



vR^iShashaIlesha kR^iShIvalaM dhinoti

(SvAmi Desikan in NAcchiyAr tirukkOlam)

Again, in verse 37 Svami Desikan describes Daya Devi as the raft that enables suffering jivans caught up in the ocean of Samsara to cross this ocean. The raft is steered by a capable boatman (Acharyas, who are experts at navigating the waters of the Samsaric ocean) and safely guide the raft to the destination (yonder bank of the Samsaric ocean, namely the Venkatam hill) as evidenced by the tribute "dishi dishi gatividbhirdeshikaIrnIyamAnA sthirataramanukampe styAnalagnA guNaIstvam". Hence it may appear that there is a contest as to who is superior, Daya Devi or Acharyas? Svami Desikan expertly resolves this in the present verse by observing that Daya Devi incarnates as the Acharyas and hence there is no difference between Daya Devi and Acharyas. It may also be argued that Lord Narayana incarnated as an Acharyan. How then is this different? Svami Desikan answers this by observing that the benefits conferred by Daya Devi incarnating as an Acharyan are several fold greater than that conferred by the Lord himself in the

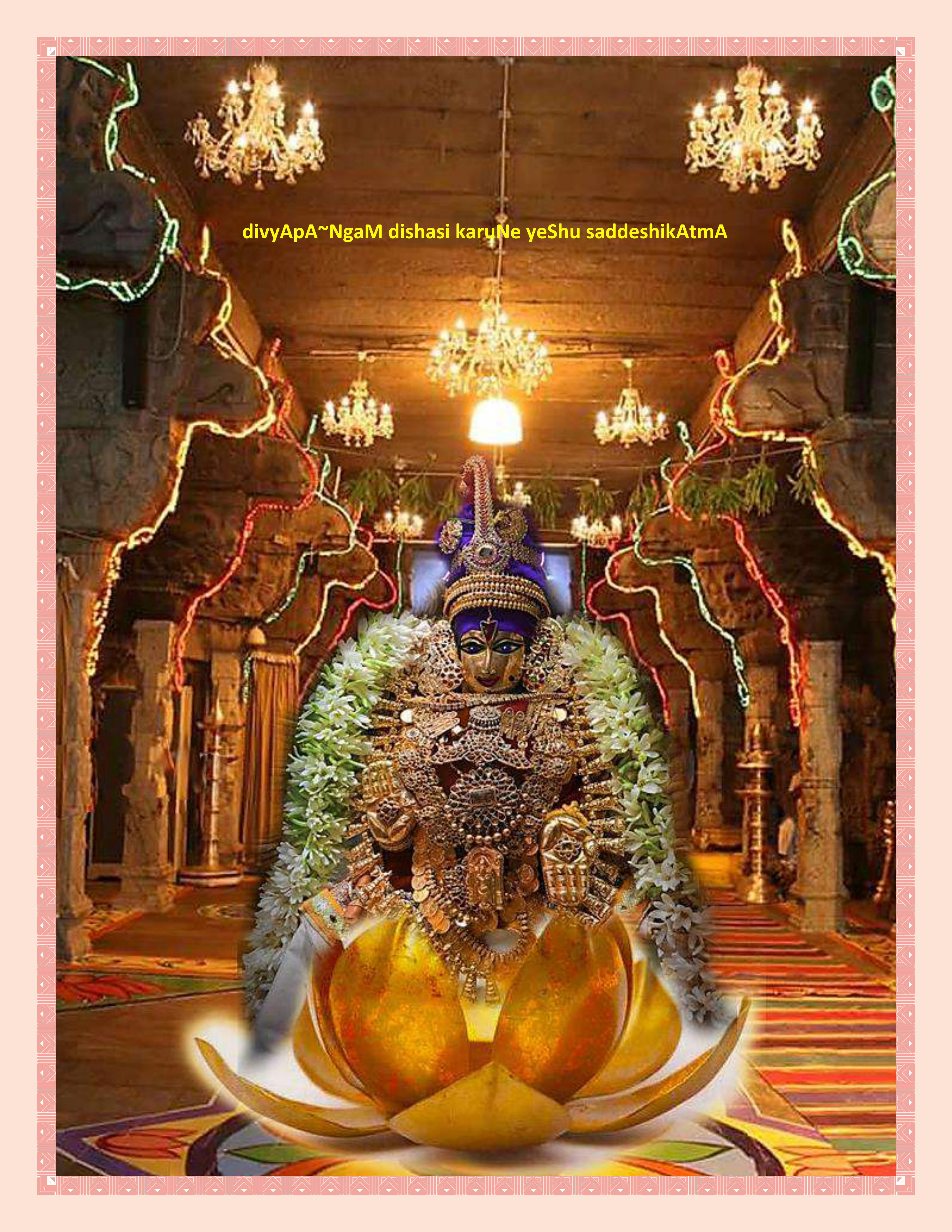
form of an Acharyan. How so? We shall see in the following. Another objection could be raised in that Daya Devi is a lady. Would this not be an exclusion? Svami Desikan notes that no exclusion criteria apply in this case. Let us see how this comes about.

In this verse Svami Desikan seeks the kataksham of Daya Devi through the tribute "divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe yeShu saddeshikAtmA". It may be borne in mind that that Svami Desikan's stotrams are replete with the glorification of the kataksham of Lord Rama, Krishna, Ranganatha, Devanayaka, and Varadaraja. In each case, he extols the uniqueness arising from those katakshams. In the present instance, he extols the kataksham of Daya Devi, who has incarnated as an Acharya. Specifically, those who receive the kataksham of Daya Devi, who incarnates as an Acharya, are blessed with "divyApa~Ngam" namely this is not the common sight arising from every individual. Instead, it is the divine sight of Daya Devi arising from an Acharyan. In this context it is important to note that the Archa forms of Lord Narayana at various kshetrams should not be viewed as a metal or stone image. On the contrary, they are no different from the shuddha satva maya divya mangaLa vigraham forms of Lord Narayana as viewed in Sri Vaikuntam, the milky ocean, or the vibhava forms of Lord Rama and Krishna. Hence, they must be contemplated upon in the same manner that one performs dhyanams to these aforesaid forms. In a like manner, one must not view an Acharya as a common man. Instead, he must be revered in the same manner as Lord Narayana in human form. In the Srimad Rahasya Trayasaram, Svami Desikan observes "AchAryan iDattile manushyatva buddhi paNNuvArkaLum emperumAnin archA mUrti iDattile lokatva buddhi paNNuvArkaLum narakattai aDaivArkaL". In keeping with this declaration, one must not view an Acharya as a mere human being and must be revered in the same manner as one reveres Lord Narayana. Hence, Svami Desikan in the present verse employs the usage "divyApa~Ngam" to denote the Acharya Kataksham. Next it may be enquired, who begets this Kataksham? This requires six fundamental factors to be in place without which it becomes impossible to obtain this blessing. These factors are: Ishvarasya sauhArdam (incurring the grace of Lord Narayana, who decides that this jivan is fit for redemption), yadR^icCha sukR^itam tathA (some good act performed unknowingly and unexpectedly by the jivan without any thought of the resulting benefit.) For example, one may visit Kanchipuram for purchasing silk sarees and that moment, be blessed with the Sevai of Lord Varadaraja's utsavam and Svami Desikan's utsavam most unexpectedly, or when one visits Srirangam for official work with no desire or knowledge of Lord Ranganatha but due to sheer happenstance receives a sevai of Lord Ranganatha,

or when one sets out at the height of the summer to seek relief from the heat and unexpectedly ends up immersing himself in the Ganga river, totally oblivious to the attendant benefits of Ganga snAnam are instances of yadR^icCha sukR^itham), viShNoH kaTAkSham (This denotes the jAyamAna kaTAkSham covered in the previous verse and specifically acquiring this at birth), advesham (bereft of enmity towards the Lord, namely acting in accordance with the Lord's dictates such as "satyam vada" and "dharmam chara"), Abhimukhyam (performing all the Aj~na kaimkaryams for the Lord and giving them due importance - hearing sat vishayam, reading the scriptures, and engaging in speech glorifying the Lord), sAtvikaIH sambhashaNam (engaging in conversations with satvikas). Only if these six factors are in place will one gain the kataksham of an Acharyan. From this it seems as though getting Bhagavad Kataksham may be possible but gaining the Acharya kataksham is quite onerous. Hence, the Acharya kataksham is glorified as "divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe". The next tribute in anvaya kramam (prose order) "vR^iShagiri patiM kShipraM prAptA yeShu saddeshikAtmA" reflects the fact that those blessed with Acharya kataksham very soon attain proximity to Lord Srinivasa. It is no trivial matter to go to the Venkatam hill and receive the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa. However, when blessed with the Kataksham of an Acharyan, this is readily accomplished. Somehow or another, the jivan is taken straight through the dvArams to the garbha gruham of Lord Srinivasa for a special darsanam. The import here is that one may even gain moksham easily but getting the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa is an arduous task. Who is it that gets this anugraham is the next question that arises. Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute "kShatrabandhvA dayaste" to denote that Kshatrabandhu and his ilk are the ones, who beget this good fortune. Kshatrabandhu was a king. However, he engaged in wrongful deeds as a result of which he was expelled from his kingdom and had to live in a forest. To support his family, he waylaid unsuspecting travelers in the forest and looted their belongings sometimes even going to the extent of killing them. Once, sage Narada was traversing this forest. As per his usual practice, Kshatrabandhu accosted him and demanded his belongings. Narada calmly replied "I shall give you everything I have. However, let me ask you why you are resorting to this wrong mode of living?" Kshatrabandhu replied that it was only to support his family. Sage Narada then said "Why don't you enquire of your family members, for whom you are undertaking this act of robbery, if they would accept a portion of the sins arising from your actions? Come back to me with their answer." Kshatrabandhu replied "How can I be sure that you will not go away in the time I go to my family and get their response to your question?" Sage Narada assured Kshatrabandhu that he will

wait patiently for the latter's return. The meeting with Sage Narada itself was yadR^icCha sukR^itam for Kshatrabandhu. He was convinced that the sage would not leave and then proceeded to enquire from his family members, who he was supporting, if they would partake of a portion of the sins arising from his wrongful actions. His wife responds that he is duty bound to take care of her and that she wanted no part of the sins arising from his actions. His children too answered that having become their father, it was his obligation to take care of them up to a stage in life and that they too would distance themselves from the sins arising from his actions. He enquired of his aged parents, who he was supporting as well if they would accept a part of his sins. They too answered in the negative. Kshatrabandhu returned to Sage Narada's presence and conveyed the answer from his family. Sage Narada then advised him "Desist from your sinful actions. You have realized that nobody will partake of the sins arising from your actions. I shall now bless you with an upadesam of the Ashtakshara mantram from which you can gain redemption." Accordingly Sage Narada blessed Kshatrabandhu with the upadesam of the Ashtakshara mantram and its esoteric meanings. Kshatrabandhu adopted this as his practice and gained moksham. Svami Desikan notes in the Daya Satakam verse that Kshatrabandhu did not resort to any of the onerous prescriptions of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, or bhakthi yoga. Instead, due to the Ashtakshara mantra upadesam from the great Acharya, Sage Narada, he performed Saranagati and gained moksham. When one gains the anugraham of an Acharyan, even the Lord's anugraham becomes secondary. Svami Desikan extols this fact in the Yatiraja Saptati tribute "anukalpa bhUtamurabhitpadaM satAm ajahattrivargamapavarga vaibhavam chalachitta vR^ittivinivartanauShadhaM sharaNaM yatIndra charaNaM vR^iNImahe". Even though seeking refuge at the Lord Narayana's feet guarantees one the benefits of dharma, artha, kAma and moksham it becomes anukalpam (secondary). anukalpam to what? it may be enquired. Svami Desikan answers this by noting that the Lord's feet become secondary to the Acharya's feet - in this case the feet of Svami Bhashyakarar. Due to the fact that the Acharya's feet acquire a status even greater than the Lord's feet, Daya Devi desires to incarnate as an Acharyan as evidenced by the tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. The Acharya's feet pave the way for moksham of Kshatrabandhu and his ilk. What about the rest of us? It may be true that in a few prior instances, moksham was gained in this manner. Will that prevail now? Svami Desikan answers this by the usage of present tense (vartamAna kAlam) in the tribute "divyApA~NgaM dishasi" namely Daya Devi is conferring this anugraham. Kshatrabandhu may be a singular instance of a great sinner gaining moksham. However, we may have committed sins of much greater

magnitude and continue to do so in the manner of Svami Desikan's Goda Stuti tribute "ArdrAparadhi". What about this? Swami Desikan assures such beings that even if this be so, once the jivan becomes privy to the Kataksham of Daya Devi in the form of an Acharyan, moksham is guaranteed in the manner of the NyAsa dashakam tributes "etaddehAvasAne mAM tvat pAdaM prApaya svayam" "tvacCheShatve sthiradhiyaM tvatprApyeka prayojanam niShiddha kAmya rahitaM kuru mAM nitya ki~Nkaram". Thus, a place in Sri Vaikuntam is reserved for one who becomes privy to the kataksham of Daya Devi in the form of an Acharyan. In the tribute "nIcanEn niRai onRum ilEn en kaN pAcam vaitta parancuDar cOtikkE ican vAnavarku enban enRAl atu tEcamO tiruvE~NkaDattAnukku" Svami NammAzhvar declares that the Lord Srinivasa is saluted by Nitya sUris, and three hundred and thirty million devathas and in turn Lord Srinivasa graces them. However, this is no great act on the part of the Lord. His greatness lies in the fact that he elevates the lowest of the low like aDiyEn declares the Azhvar in an outpouring of intense naishchyam (self depracation). The Azhvar ends with a rhetorical question "which is greater? The Lord's anugraham for the Nitya Suris and three hundred and thirty million devathas that come to salute Him or His extreme compassion for the lowest of the low jivans?" Svami Desikan mirrors the Azhvar's anubhavam in his Saranagati Dipikai tribute "kartavyamityanukalaM kalayAmyakR^ityaM svAminnakR^ityamiti kR^ityamapi tyajAmi anyadvyatikramaNajAtamanantamartha sthAne dayA bhavatu te mayi sArvabhaumI" wherein he seeks the Daya of Lord Dipaprakasar. Svami Desikan describes himself as one who engages in forbidden acts with vicarious delight in the manner of the declaration that one must not contaminate running water, while readily giving up the prescribed acts that one should necessarily perform. Svami Desikan declares "Only Your Daya can redeem me from this pitiable plight by correcting me and bringing me on the right path." The implication is that the Lord accrues great fame by redeeming errant baddha jIvans, who are the most egregious violators of the Lord's commands, on account of His Daya. The next tribute from the present Daya Satakam verse "vishvAchAryA vidhi shiva mukhAH svAdhikAroparuddhAH" indicates that great ones like Brahma, Rudra, and Indra have performed numerous yaj~nas to attain their elevated positions. For example, Rudra is hailed as the all-knowing one. The tribute "ArogyaM bhAskarAt icChet shriyaM icChet hutAsanAt IshvaraM j~nAnaM icChet" reflects the fact that knowledge can be gained from worship of Rudra. In Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan while discussing the Ashtakshara mantram pays tribute to Rudra as "sarvaj~nanAna Ahirbudhnya bhagavAn". Rudra of such elevated status has not gained moksham. He is in prakR^iti maNDalam engaged in


divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe yeShu saddeshikAtmA

his assigned task of destruction. How could he not have knowledge pertaining to moksham and not undertake the necessary action to gain this? Next let us consider Brahma. He is engaged in constant recitation of the Vedam through his four mouths. Any devata that encounters difficulties, resorts to Brahma with a prayer for protection. Brahma of such loftiness too has not gained moksham. Instead, he too is in prakR^iti maNDalam engaged in the task of creation. How is this possible? Then we examine Indra. He is also in a similar state not having gained Moksham. Elevated bhakti yogis like Vyasa, Vasishta, Vishvamitra and others are anxiously looking forward to the bliss of moksham but will gain this only after attaining a zero balance of karma at the end of a certain birth. The Brahma Sutra states "yavadadhikAram avasthitiH adhikArikANAm" to describe the fact that these elevated beings occupy positions of authority. Only after the prescribed time when this authority ends can they gain moksham. Svami Desikan alludes to this vakyam in the tribute "svAdhikAroparuddhAH". When this is the state of elevated beings, how is it possible that mere common beings like us can gain moksham? Svami Desikan answers this by noting that this benefit comes about entirely on account of Daya Devi's kataksham in her incarnation as an Acharya. So far Svami Desikan has expounded on important Vedantic truths. In the concluding tribute of this verse "vidhi shiva mukhAH svAdhikAroparuddhAH manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^ishe tvam", he exhibits his skill as Kavi-tArkika-simham. One is never appreciated as a poet unless an appropriate simile is used to make a point. In this case, the point to be made is that Daya Devi is a female. Is it appropriate for Her to incarnate as an Acharya? This is answered in the tribute "manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^ishe tvam". The example here is one of a mother blessed with three children, the oldest of whom is brilliant, excels in his studies, goes to the Temple without prompting, and performs his duties without fail. The second child requires some prompting but complies with instructions when prompted even though he may be otherwise distracted and engaged in trivial pursuits. The third child is a complete contrast in that neither does he know of his own accord the right code of behavior, nor does he listen when instructed in this matter. In fact, he exhibits a total disdain for prescribed code of behavior. When a visitor arrives at this home and the discussion of the children arises, the first two are addressed in a matter-of-fact manner. Whereas when it comes to the third child, who is completely dim-witted and incapable of following instructions, the mother exudes affection (vAtsalyam). This is verily the depiction of the plight of all baddha jivans who are neither aware of the correct code of conduct in the manner of elevated bhakti yogis like Vasishta and Vishvamitra, nor are they willing to listen when instructed by

learned ones. These beings are described as the "jaDa iva sute", namely the dim-witted ones, foolish ones or the ones bereft of intellect. Since this child is incapable of doing anything on its own or even when instructed, the mother's affection for this child is overwhelming. In a like manner, Daya Devi, the mother of the entire universe, out of Her overbearing affection for errant baddha jIvans caught up in samsaram, blesses them with Her kataksham through her incarnation as an Acharyan. The analogy is complete when Brahma, Rudra, and Indra are akin to the first child of the mother, whereas the errant baddha jivans behave in the manner of the third child. Consequently, the mother, Daya Devi, out of great concern for the well-being of the third child, elevates the priority and confers Her kataksham on this "third" child in Her inacarnation as an Acharyan. As a consequence, this child gains moksham immediately in the manner of "etat dehAvasAne mAm". Therefore, even the bhAgyam of appreciating the incarnation of Daya Devi as an Acharyan and Her anugraham to suffering baddha jivans comes about entirely due to the grace of Svami Desikan, who blessed us with this insight. The kataksham of Daya Devi in Her incarnation as an Acharyan is "divyApA~Ngam". This divyApA~Ngam is continuing even at the present time. It will be everlasting if one develops bhakti for Svami Desikan. Having heard the benefit conferred by Daya Devi in Her incarnation as an Acharya to Her retarded child, is it really inappropriate for us to call ourselves foolish, dim witted or devoid of intellect? The readers are encouraged to draw their own conclusions in this matter. Once again this exposition is concluded with a prayerful appeal to Svami Desikan and Daya Devi."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin: "Oh Karuna Devi! You presumably take the body of a good preceptor. You then cast Your divine eye-glance on chosen disciples. Those who are thus privileged to receive Your manifestation as the benevolent eye-glance of a good preceptor quickly attain Lord Srinivasa - the Lord of Vrushagiri. That is, I repeat, they gain moksha. It is almost an instantaneous result. The sinful nature is not relevant. For example, sinners like Kshatrabandhu were no exception to the rule of immediate deliverance by reason of Acharya-Kripa.

We then see the contrast phenomenon: Devas such as Brahma, Rudra, and Indra have continued in their elevated positions for a long time. They have not been able to gain Moksha, notwithstanding the authority granted to them by the Lord. A commoner would look unconvinced. Office of power is no qualification for Moksha. In fact, their authority stands in the way of gaining moksha. They need to relinquish office, seek a preceptor, enjoy his eye-glances and perform the necessary pleasing actions. However, I on the other hand am lacking in merit, though not suffering the

disqualification of high office (like Brahma, Rudra, and Indra), feel that You, Oh Daya Devi as my Mother, will show special fondness and interest in a son - deficient in all equipment and virtues; being a dunce with regard to general worldly matters.

Great sinners like Kshatrabandhu are cited for quickly jumping from sinful life to Lord Srinivasa’s abode (Tirumalai) by dint of a good perceptor’s kindly glance. Though spelt out in an impressive manner, this ought to be understood correctly consistent with the concepts outlined previously. (This is by no means a license to indulge in sinful acts since even the worst sinners can gain redemption.) For example, this sinner-king received advice from a sage to chant Govinda’s name. He was purified in course of time. A change came over him causing him to resort to Prapatti. This is a prelude to the next decad, which highlights the glory of Prapatti.”





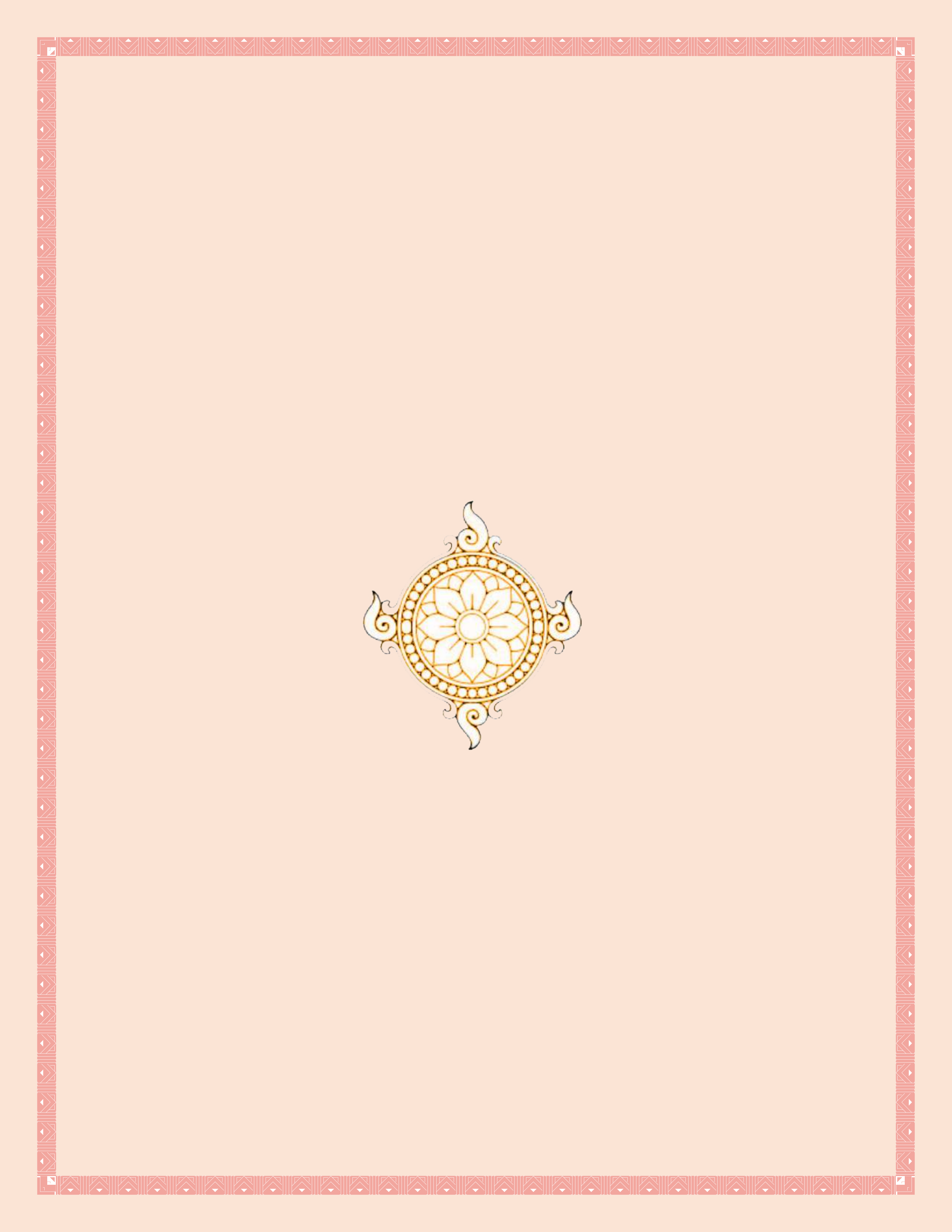

SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 51 – 60)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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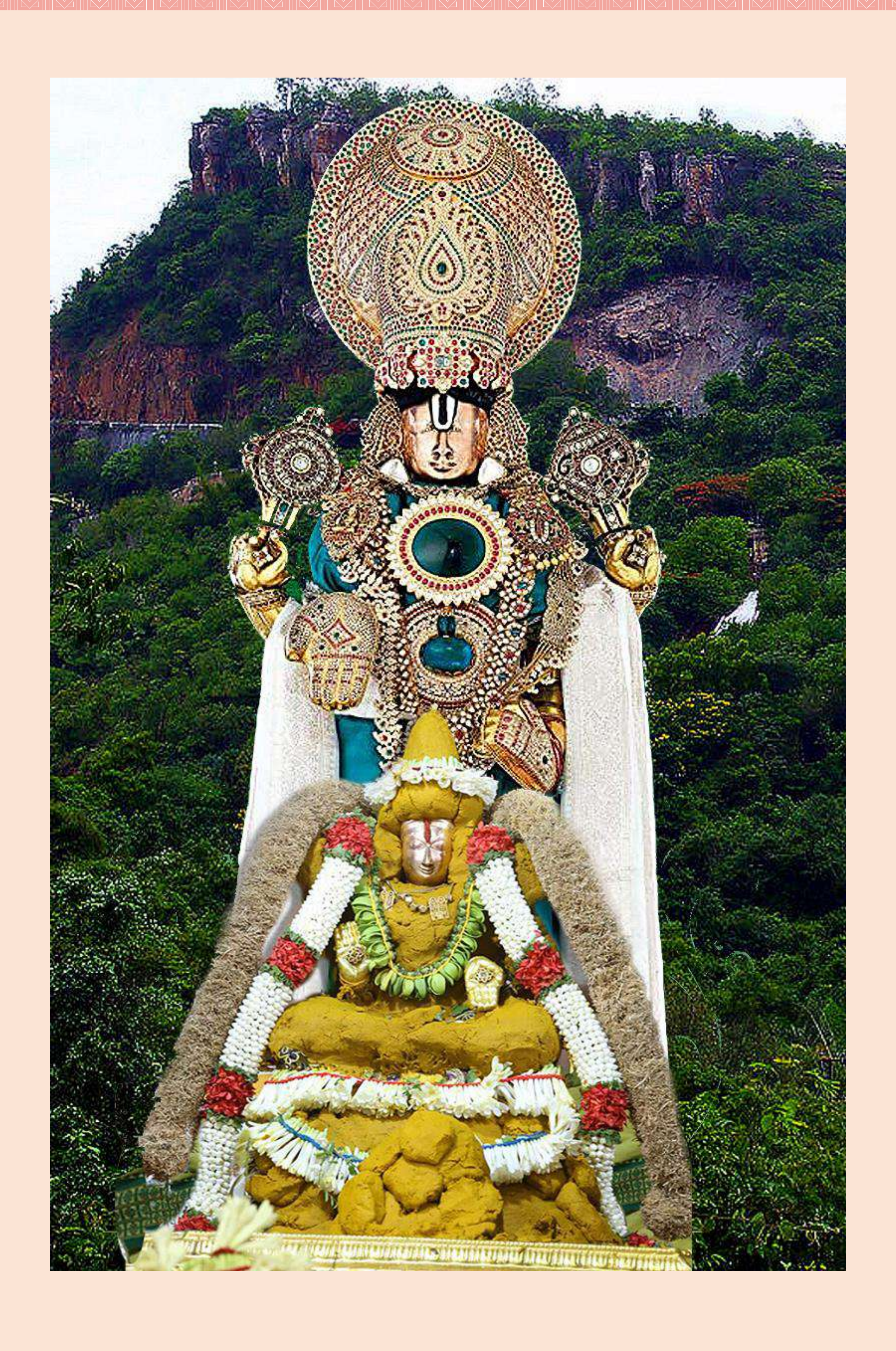
SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy





SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||



Slokam 51

अति कृपणोऽपि जन्तुरधिगम्य दये भवतीम्

अशिथिल धर्मसेतु पदवीं रुचिरामचिरात्।

अमित महोर्मि जाल मतिलङ्घ्य भवाम्बु निधिं

भवति वृषाचलेश पद पत्तन नित्य धनी ॥ ५१ ॥

ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi jantur adhigamya daye bhavatIm

ashithila dharmasetu padavIM rucirAmacirAt|

amita mahormi jAla matila~Nghya bhavAmbu nidhiM

bhavati vR^iShAcalesha pada pattana nitya dhanI||51



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "We are enjoying the central pendant, Daya Satakam, in the garland of gems denoting the stotrams of Svami Desikan. In the process, we get to partake of the delight arising from Svami Desikan's glorification of Lord Srinivasa through his tribute to Daya Devi. So far fifty verses from the Daya Satakam have been covered. We now start the fifty first verse corresponding to the sixth decad of this Stotram. It has been our bhagyam to undertake this task of expositing on the esoteric meanings of each verse of this stotram. When Andal began Her rendition of the Tiruppavai verses commencing with "mArgazhi tinkaL", it was on a Pournami day. This does not happen every year during Margazhi masam but occurred only on the day that Andal set out to perform the pAvai nombu. As adiyen embarks upon the upanyasam for the sixth decad, it corresponds to Sravana nakshtram, the nakshatram of Lord Srinivasa as well as Svami Desikan. Svami Desikan is no different from Lord Srinivasa. This day also happens to be Kartikai masam Panchami dinam, when adiyen is rendering the upanyasam. This is the avatara tirunal for Thayar. Thayar is no different from Daya Devi as documented in verse 6 of the Daya Satakam through the tribute "samasta jananIM vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm", namely if a fitting form were to be assigned to the Daya guNam of Lord Srinivasa, it would be none other than Padmavati Thayar. Thus, adiyen is commencing the upanyasam of the sixth decad of this stotram on the avatara dinam of Thayar, when the nakshatram of Lord Srinivasa and Svami Desikan is in force, which is a great bhagyam for adiyen. It is

helpful to note that Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi containing 1102 verses is broken up into 10 themes, with each set of 100 pasurams reflecting a specific theme. In the sixth set of 100 verses, Svami NammAzhvar glorifies the doctrine of Saranagati and performs his formal surrender to Lord Srinivasa in the ulakam uNDa pasurams (Tiruvaimozhi 6.10). Svami Desikan maps each set of 100 verses from the Tiruvaimozhi into ten verses of the Daya Satakam, thus maintaining a one-to-one correspondence with the messages of Svami NammAzhvar. Significantly, Svami Desikan devotes the sixth decad to elaborate on the glory of Saranagati and performs Saranagati to the Daya of Lord Srinivasa, thereby closely following the Azhvar's footsteps. Therefore, it is adiyen's bhagyam, entirely on account of Daya Devi's anugraham, to present this upanyasam on the sixth decad at such an auspicious time. In fact adiyen wondered if he was fit to render upanyasams on Svami Desikan's *magnam opus*, Daya Satakam. However, the command of Bhagavatas was responsible for adiyen to undertake this task. So far 50 verses have been completed due to the grace of Svami Desikan. adiyen hopes to cover the remaining verses in the spirit of Svami Desikan's Varadaraja Panchasat salutation "sheShAdhvalesha nayane ka ivAtibhAraH" (You have brought me this far. Would it be too much of a burden to support me to get to the destination?) The fifty first verse is "ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi jantur adhigamya daye bhavatIm ashithila dharmasetu padavIM ruchirAmachirAt amita mahormi jAla matila~Nghya bhavAmbu nidhiM bhavati vR^iShAchalesha pada pattana nitya dhanI" This set of 10 verses is set to nardataka meter. This meter is most moving and can melt even the most stone hearted individuals. This meter is the cry of anguish from a bird. Thus, it is most appropriate for expositing on the doctrine of Saranagati. The previous verse highlighted the anugraham of Daya Devi through Her incarnation as an Acharya, whose compassionate eyeglances pave the way for redemption of all suffering jivans in the manner of a mother's overbearing affection for Her retarded son. The inner meaning is that Acharyas rush to the rescue of helpless, incapable beings (akinchanas), who have no other recourse (ananya gatitvam). This set of ten verses highlights the manner in which the anugraham of Acharyas manifests itself. The previous verse outlined the six fundamental factors that need to be in place for one to gain Acharya kataksham. Once this is gained, the Acharyas do not rest content. In response to Arjuna's single plea "param vakShyAmi", Lord Krishna could have responded very simply with the statement "Go to war and do your duty." However, He did not do that. Instead, Lord Krishna painstakingly conveyed His message through 18 chapters in the form of 700 verses of the Bhagavadgita. This came about from His intense concern for Arjuna to ensure that Arjuna gained a comprehensive

understanding of the philosophical truths embedded in the Upanishads. If Lord Krishna observed Arjuna falling asleep, He would jolt him awake with statements like "bhUya eva mahAbAho shruNu me paraM vacaH" (wake up and listen to this since I am expounding upon the foremost truths). The important fact to be observed here is that there may be a delay in getting the Acharya kataksham. However, once an individual is privy to this kataksham, the Acharya out of utmost concern for the well-being of his sishyan is constantly engaged in thoughts of how to reinforce his message and keep the sishyan on the right path. The Acharyan expounds on the two ways to gain Moksham, namely through Bhakti Yogam and Prapatti Yogam. The former is "gurUpAyam" namely it is extremely arduous and demanding. This calls for considerable strength and fortitude on the part of the sishyan. However, for one who is totally incapable, utterly helpless, and has no other recourse, the Acharyan exposits that the prescribed path is Prapatti. Even for capable ones, the fructification of Bhakti Yogam necessarily requires Prapatti as an auxiliary aid. There are two forms of Prapatti - anga prapatti and svatantra prapatti. The former is a surrender to Lord Narayana prior to commencing Bhakti Yogam for successful completion of Bhakti yogam. The latter is an appeal to Lord Narayana with the statement that one is totally unfit to undertake the rigors of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga. Therefore, the Lord Himself should be in the form of these arduous requirements and enable him to successfully gain the same benefit as the Bhakti Yogam. For common folks like us, Svatantra Prapatti is the prescribed path due to being incapable of undertaking the rigors of Bhakti Yogam and being helpless (akinchanyas) with no other recourse (ananyagatitvam). The Acharyas pave the way for such sishyas to attain Moksham through the grace of Lord Narayana, through Svatantra Prapatti. Svami Desikan declares quite emphatically that one who does not adopt one of these two means - anga Prapatti (Bhakti Yogam) or Svatantra Prapatti will never gain Moksham in the tribute "prapannAt anyeshAm na dishati mukundaH nija padam". Thus, Svami Desikan in this decad highlights the glory of Prapatti and enumerates the benefits of performing Prapatti before formally performing his Saranagati to Daya Devi in the last verse of this set of ten. The acts of elders in the manner of the statement "AcaratiH shreShTaH" only brings about good for all those who follow their lead. They serve as exemplars for others to follow in their footsteps. In this context, it is impossible to think of anyone greater than Svami Desikan as an elder. He has set in place the path of Saranagati to be adopted by all his followers. The import of this verse can be simply expressed through a single line or can be expounded upon for hours on end. The simple explanation is provided first. Just as a poor man, who is penniless and



incapable of acquiring wealth on his own clings to a mechanism for getting rich, Daya Devi functions as the dam or bridge, which enables helpless beings, who are absolutely incapable and caught in the samsaric ocean, to effortlessly cross over the ocean and attain the samrajyam of Lord Srinivasa. Thereby, they truly become the wealthy ones. A nuanced explanation is called for to account for the multi-faceted genius of Svami Desikan's rendering of this verse. Svami Desikan describes the state of beings caught up in the samsara ocean as "akincanan" namely one who is absolutely helpless and incapable, lacking any means of his own to cross this ocean. On the other hand, Lord Srinivasa does not discriminate on the basis of someone being wealthy or poor, resourceful or helpless, scholarly, or unread when it comes to the matter of granting Moksham. The usage "ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi", synonymous with "durbalan" from this verse is meant to denote the state of one who is extremely weak (lacking in strength). The weakness, "daurbalyam" can arise on account of a number of factors - lacking in knowledge, strength, resources and the like. In this context, it denotes the lack of appropriate knowledge and strength to undertake the onerous prescriptions of Bhakti Yogam. This state is akin to that of a poor man seeking to become rich. In order to get rich, he needs to cross an ocean to reach a city on the yonder banks of the ocean. However, he is incapable of crossing the ocean on his own. Nor does he have the means due to being poverty stricken. In days of yore, it was quite common for people hailing from villages to travel to cities in order to find opportunities for gaining wealth. In the process it was not uncommon to be confronted with the task of crossing a large water body to go from the village to the city. That analogy can be taken a step further. In the present time, those residing in cities venture to cross the ocean to reach foreign lands to seek opportunities to gain wealth. In this context the "kR^ipaNan" denotes one who is lacking in the required knowledge and strength to cross the ocean of samsara. The usage "ati kR^ipaNaH" is meant to depict the state of this individual at the extreme in terms of lacking knowledge and strength. The analogy to an extremely poor man, who lacks knowledge, strength, and the means to cross the ocean to gain wealth becomes appropriate. How does he hope to cross the ocean? "kArpaNyam" reflecting dependence on some means other than one's own is verily a fault. However, this fault becomes an "a~Ngam" (component or limb) for SaraNagati. The Gautama Dharma Sutra describe eight Atma guNams that need to be possessed. "akArpaNyam is one of the eight Atma guNams outlined therein. The foremost among these 8 Atma guNams is Daya. In an earlier verse, it was noted that Daya is the trait which seeks to relieve others of their suffering without expecting anything in return. Next "sarva bhUteShu kShantiH" is the specific

description of the Atma guNam of forbearance towards all and exhibiting a forgiving disposition towards their shortcomings. Then comes “anasUya”, namely being freed from jealousy when another begets something good and exhibiting great joy “parotkarSham” at this occurrence. Focusing on other’s faults alone to the exclusion of all their noble qualities is also a form of “asUya” (jealousy). In this context highlighting the noble qualities of others while ignoring their faults becomes part of “anasUya.” This is followed by “shaucam” denoting AcAram by conforming to the prescriptions of the Sastram (shAstra vihita) in the manner outlined in the Sastram. “anAyAsam” denoting the opposite of “AyAsam” comes next. “AyAsam” is the trait where one is fixated upon something to the exclusion of all else. For example, when one places a pen in some remote place in a house and then moves aggressively to search for the pen oblivious to everything else around them characterizes “AyAasam”. This could also denote the obsession on one’s part to gain or purchase something at all costs. “AnAyasam” is the exact opposite, denoting a calm disposition. Then comes the Atma guNam of “mangalam”. This is commonly used to denote auspiciousness. One’s utterance should always be pleasant in keeping with the Vedam statement “nAshlIlankIrtayet”. “ashlIlam” denotes that which is bad/terrible. This should not be uttered even in words is the import of the Vedam tribute. If one engages in this act, it would affect the individual by inflicting the same state upon him as the uttered words. Next among the Atma guNas is “akArpaNyam”. “karpaNyam” (akincanyam) denote one’s inability to undertake a specific task. One must not give into this and on the other hand resolve “this is possible for me to do”. This illustrates the meaning of “akArpaNyam”. “sAhase shrIH prativasati” is the declaration that which denotes that “only one who resolves that something is possible is graced by Mahalakshmi Thayar”. Therefore, one must not resort to inability as an excuse to refrain from undertaking a task. Then comes the Atma guNam of “aspR^iha”, which denotes the lack of desire. In particular, it reflects the state of one who is content with what comes his way as Bhagavad sankalpam and not harboring desires for everything under the sun. These are the eight Atma guNas instructed in the Gautama Dharma Sutra. In keeping with this sastram “kArpaNyam” which is an opposite of “akArpaNyam” becomes a doSham. In the Bhagavadgita Arjuna states “kArpaNya doShopahatasvabhavaH pR^icChAmi tvAm dharmasammUDachetAH yacChreyaH syAnnishcitaM brUhi tanme shiShyaste(a)haM shAdhi mAM tvAM prapannam” (Oh Lord KrishNa! I have the doSham of kArpaNyam (inability). I do not know if I can engage in war with these many near and dear ones. More than that I am unable to make the distinction

between dharma and adharma. Submitting my weakness to You, I request You through a formal surrender to accept me as Your disciple.) However, this doSham becomes an accessory for SaraNAgati. In the Ramayanam, Lord Rama states "doShoyadyapi tasyasyAt" while contemplating on the means to cross the ocean. ("Even if he is replete with faults, I will not swerve from My position of offering him protection, since he has performed sharaNAgati to Me", is the import of this statement from Lord Rama.) In keeping with this declaration from Lord Rama, even though kArpaNyam is a doSham for all other purposes, it is accepted as an accessory for sharaNAgati. In the context of the Daya Satakam tribute "ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi", it denotes the limit of helplessness and incapability to the extreme on the part of the jivan. Namely, the jivan is completely lacking the required knowledge and strength to undertake the onerous prescriptions of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga. Normally, "ati kR^ipaNaH" would be sufficient to describe the plight of this jivan. However, Svami Desikan goes a step further with the usage "api" to emphasize the fact, that even such a being, who is totally incapable of adopting the means of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga and bhakti yoga was able to cross the samsaric ocean. This is literally equivalent to a blind man somehow against all odds crossing an ocean. The nyAsa tilakam tribute "andhonandha grahaNa vashago yAti ra~Ngesha yadvat" becomes relevant here. In order to get to a destination, it requires one to know the way to the destination, in addition to being skillful while travelling to avoid pitfalls. In this context, andhaH denotes one who has strength but lacks knowledge. "andhaH" literally means a blind one. Here, the blindness is a reference to his lack of knowledge of the path to be traversed to get to the destination. He seeks the help of one endowed with the knowledge of the path to be traversed and safely reaches the destination. The next category pertains to those endowed with knowledge but lacking the strength to undertake the travel. These are denoted as "pangu". If one is able to get him on a boat to cross over the ocean, he is capable of steering the boat. One who possesses neither the knowledge nor the strength to cross the ocean is captured through another dR^iShtAntam (perspective). This is illustrated through the example of one who is a child of a servitor in the palace of a king. The servitor each day prepares delicacies that the king likes. The leftovers of food after the king has finished his meal are offered to the child by the servitor. Thus, the child gets to enjoy the same delicacies that are partaken by the king. This child neither knows the king nor is he aware of the role of his father in preparing the delicacies for the king. However, the child gets to partake of the same exotic dishes partaken by the king. In a like manner, the grace of the Acharya prevails in great measure for those lacking in knowledge

and strength to cross the ocean and get to the destination. In this case the destination is Moksham resulting in eternal kaimkaryam for the divine couple. The astonishment at one lacking in knowledge and strength yet reaching the destination of moksham is described in the salutation "ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi". Next the term "jantuH" from the Daya Satakam tribute is examined. "jantuH" denotes an animal. Svami Desikan uses this tribute to describe his state. Instead of describing his state as that of a man, Brahmana, erudite, or otherwise the characterization employed here is that of a mere creature. This is intended to capture a broader class of beings such as cows and the like, which too are eligible for Saranagati. Hence the usage "jantuH" Again out of extreme humility Svami Desikan describes himself as "jantuH". However, this is appropriate for ignorant baddha jivans lacking in knowledge and strength making them fitting receptacles for the grace of an Acharyan. The analogy is complete when one observes a helpless dog being swept away by the torrential flow and strong currents of the river. This is the state of the baddha jivans described herein. This is the prelude to such beings obtaining the grace of Daya Devi to cross the ocean and attain extreme wealth. The next tribute from this verse "adhigamya daye bhavatIm" when examined in prose order "daye bhavatIm adhigamya" yields the meaning "Oh Daya Devi! helpless jivans upon securing Your grace, through surrender to Your feet are easily able to cross the ocean of samsara." The inner meaning is that those beings who are graced with the kataksham of Daya Devi, who incarnated as Acharya as documented in the previous verse, are blessed with untold wealth. In this context, Daya Devi is described in this verse through the tributes "rucirAm" and "ashithila dharmasetu padavIM" to denote that She is the path to bridge/dam denoting the dharma setu, which is eternal and is accessed by a delectable path characterized by "rucirAm". In this context, it needs to be understood that the bridge/dam is lasting and permanent. However, the access to the bridge/dam can be difficult. Svami Desikan notes here that the access path too is pleasant on account of Daya Devi. The path to be traversed to Sri Vaikuntam in the present instance is a reference to "arcirAdi gati", namely that path by which one traverses to the destination, Sri Vaikuntam, from which there is no return. This is the rAja vazhi (royal path) which is superior to all other routes involving treacherous lanes and by-lanes, which are not only dangerous but also make for unpleasant travel. In this instance, Daya Devi functions as the path (arcirAdi gati), which is extremely pleasant. One needs to be a bhAgyavan to traverse this path. We may endure great tribulations in our attempts to travel to Tirumalai to offer prostration to Lord Srinivasa. We may or may not be blessed with the darsanam. However, when performing pradakShiNam of Temple



prAkaram after crossing the VarAha puShkaraNi and SvAmi PuShkaraNi, having prostrated at the Gopuram, there is a unique joy that arises. This is easily missed by many due to the exhaustion caused by a long wait in the line to gain a darsanam. The only thought that comes to mind is to get the laddu prasadam at the counter and head home, while missing out on the important mahapradakShiNam and prostrating at the Gopuram. This kramam (practice) of saluting Lord Srinivasa has been established by elders and Acharyas for our benefit. The joy that is gained by following this practice is the same joy experienced by the liberated ones who traverse the arciradi gati, denoted by Daya Devi, leading one to the bridge/dam. Here the depiction of the path for us has been laid out. Then, the role of Daya Devi is highlighted. This is described in the next tribute of this verse "ashithila dharmasetu padavIM". This denotes the fact that this bridge is no ordinary bridge. It is the Dharma Setu. The Lord is described as "amR^itasya esha setuH" in the Vedas, namely the amrutam of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam is readily obtained by the bridge known as Lord Narayana. The Vedam declares "eSha setuH vidharaNa eShAM lokAnAmasaMbhedAya." The word "setu" has two meanings- one is that it denotes a bridge. The other is that it means a dam that prevents water from overflowing. The bridge or dam to which Daya Devi takes us is the Dharma Setu as evidenced by the statements "kR^iShNam dharmam sanAtanam" and "rAmo vigrahavAn dharmaH" The Daya Satakam tribute qualifies this further with the attribute "ashithila dharmasetu". "shithila" means non-conforming or lax. This is due to the fact that for some beings it becomes impossible to conform to dharma. However, the usage "ashithila" comes to the fore in this context. "shithila" also denotes obstacles that can come up in one's quest to conform to dharma. This can be in the form of unforeseen circumstances that arise or confusion about what needs to be done, lack of a clear perception of right and wrong and the like. However, the Dharma Setu described in this Daya Satakam verse is "ashithila Dharma Setu". Lord Narayana has undertaken the solemn oath to protect at any cost Saranagatas, who surrender to Him. This is documented in the Ramayanam declaration "etat vratham mama". This was in response to the Vibhishana Saranagati appeal through the verse "sarvaloka sharaNyAya rAghavAya mahAtmane nivedayita mAm kShipram vibhishaNamupasthitam" The import of this verse is that "I, VibhishaNa belonging to the rakshasa clan, the brother of Ravana, who is the sworn enemy of Lord Rama, have arrived to surrender at Lord Rama's feet, which is the refuge for all beings of the universe, regardless of their class, creed origin, sex, affiliation, wealth or learning. Therefore, please inform Lord Rama of my arrival." Lord Rama is glorified as ashithila - one who never deviates

from His sworn position. It may also be recalled that when the Maharishis welcomed Rama during His forest residence and offered Him upacharams and explained their plight of being unable to effectively perform their tapas due to unbearable torture from the Rakshasas like Khara and Dushana, Lord Rama accepted their appeal as their Saranagati to Him and assured them that He will exterminate the entire Rakshasa clan. After assuring the Rishis, when Lord Rama and Sita were returning to their hermitage, Sita Devi enquires of the Lord "smaraye tvam na shikShaye" (Oh Lord I am merely reminding You. I am not taking You to task in any manner because, whatever You resolve to do will only be correct and in full compliance with Dharma. These Rakshasas no doubt harass the Maharishis and frequently prevent them from carrying out their Tapas. However, as forest residents they have caused us no harm. Why then this hasty resolve to exterminate their entire clan?) To this Lord Rama responded "apyaham jIvitam jahyAm tvAm vA sIte salakShmaNam na tu pratij~nAm samshR^itya brAhmaNebhyo visheShataH" (I may forsake You, that is dearer to Me than My own life. Let alone this, Lakshmana, who is even dearer, may also be forsaken in the same manner. However, I will uphold at any cost My promise to the Brahmanas, that have surrendered to Me with the request for help to stop the torment from the rakshasas.) This illustrates the fact that the Lord is "ashithila dharma setu" namely that the Lord upholds dharma no matter what obstacles or challenges He has to face in the process. A further example illustrating this fact is that learned Acharyas do not compromise on their anushtanam no matter what comes in their path by way of obstructions. Trikala sandhyavandanam specifically is performed by these learned ones at the appropriate time no matter what. This establishes the fact that Acharyas are "ashithila dharma setu". Lord Krishna too in a similar manner is "ashithila dharma setu". How so? In the Kauravaa sabha, when Draupadi is being disrobed by Dushasana in the presence of all elders - Bhishma, Drona, Kripacharya, and Dritharashtra even though blind but had full knowledge of the ongoing event in his court, and her own husbands, who are helpless spectators. Not one of them stepped forward to rescue her from this plight. At this juncture, she submits the appeal "sha~Nkha cakra gadApANe dvArakA nilyAcyuta govinda puNDarikAkSha rakShamAm sharaNagatam" When Draupadi cried out helplessly "Govinda" "Govinda" nobody in the court came to her rescue. Lord Krishna came to her aid with an endlessly long garment that draped her and caused Dushasana to give up in his attempt due to sheer exhaustion. However, Lord Krishna always remembered Draupadi's appeal and often remarked "I was only able to fulfill Draupadi's appeal of Govinda. However, she rendered many other tributes such as PuNDarIkakSha,

KR^iShNa, dvArakavAsa and the like. Therefore, I am still in debt as far as Draupadi is concerned. Only when I ensure all kshemams for her would I be freed from this debt that I owe her." Therefore, the Lord is undoubtedly "ashithila dharma setu". Next Daya Devi that forms the path for accessing this "ashithila dharma setu" is described in the tribute as "rucirAmacirAt". Traversing the path of Daya Devi provides a pleasant uplifting experience. Those travelling by car can attest to a pleasant travel experience if the road to the destination is good. In a like manner, Daya Devi offers a pleasant path for reaching the dharma setu - Lord Narayana. Furthermore, the path denoted by Daya Devi allows for swift access to the Dharma Setu. It is not a circuitous or treacherous path instead it is "rucirAmacirAt", the exact opposite. The next tribute "amita mahormi jAla matila~Nghya bhavAmbu nidhiM" of the Daya Satakam discusses the ocean that is being crossed. An ordinary ocean is replete with strong currents and tidal waves making for treacherous travel conditions. Furthermore, it is replete with sharks, whales, and alligators, waiting to devour anyone that dares to attempt to cross the ocean. What would be one's fate if they get trapped by one of these creatures? In the context of attaining the Dharma Setu, the ocean that needs to be crossed is the sin-pile of the jivan, which is a vast ocean even more treacherous than an ordinary ocean described earlier. This ocean is replete with six types of waves denoted by ShaD-urmi (hunger, thirst, sorrow, ignorance causing one to think that the Lord's property is his own, old age and death). One may with all sincerity intend to engage in dhyanam of Lord Narayana. However, the individual may be unable to sustain this when confronted with the pangs of hunger and thirst. However, when one resorts to Daya Devi as one's sole refuge She enables the effortless crossing of this samsaric ocean. Not only this, upon crossing this ocean, She ensures that the jIvan gains the greatest treasure. This is intended to address the what if question when one seeks to cross the ocean to go to far off lands in search of opportunities to gain wealth. However, upon arriving at the promised land only tribulations and obstacles for gaining wealth are encountered. Then the trouble taken to cross the ocean becomes a wasted effort. This is analogous to partaking of forbidden items such as onion and garlic in the hope that it would rid one of a disease. However, if the disease is not cured despite partaking of these items, one is only left with the sin arising from partaking of a forbidden item. In a like manner, if one undertakes great effort to cross the ocean and reach far away lands in search of opportunities to create wealth, and instead only encounters obstacles, and troubles that are counter to his pursuits, the entire process becomes a wasted effort. On the other hand, in this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan documents the bounty that awaits a jantu (a

common being), that is incapable of crossing the ocean of Samsara on its own but clings to the consort of the Lord, Daya Devi, who effortlessly enables the crossing of this Samsaric ocean. First, one arrives in a grand city. This city is vast in expanse. Just as those successful ones gain great wealth by crossing the ocean and reach a far away land replete with opportunities to gain wealth, never return to the village from where they started, those who reach this grand city through the path of Daya Devi attain the supreme wealth of Lord Narayana and never return to samsara again! This wealth is glorified through the tribute "bhavati vR^iShAchalesha pada pattana nitya dhanI". The inner meaning is that those who traverse the pleasant path known as Daya Devi attain the feet of Lord Srinivasa, who stands on top of the Vrushachala hill, and gain the benefit of eternal Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This is unceasing, constant, never diminishing, and delightful. Therefore, they are forever wealthy. Svami Alavandar declares in the Stotraratnam "dhanaM madIyaM tava pAda pa~NkajaM kadA nu sAkShAt karavANi cakShuShA" (My wealth is attaining Your lotus feet. When would I have the good fortune of begetting the kaimkaryam for these feet?). Svami Desikan echoes a similar message in the VairAgya Pancakam salutation "durIshvaradvAra bahirvitardikA durAsikAyaI racito(a)yamanjaliH yadanjanabhaM nirapAyamasti me dhananjayasyandana bhUShaNaM dhanam" (The Lord who the ornament for the chariot of Dhananjaya is my wealth.) This Lord Narayana is the nirapAya (undying) dhanam - wealth for us. Acquiring this wealth poses no danger and only gives rise to bliss. In the YatirAja Saptati salutation "abhigamya samyaganagAH sumedhasaH yaticakravartipadapadma pattanam haribhaktadAsya rasikAH parasparaM krayavikrayArhadashayA samindhate" Svami Desikan affirms that we beget wealth beyond our imagination and comprehension, by resorting to the feet of the emperor among Yatis - Svami Bhashyakarar. This is well understood by those possessed of keen intellect, who revel in traversing the grand city known as the feet of Svami Bhashyakarar. They partake of the elixir of Hari bhakti that permeates this grand city with mutual delight. They address each other as "aDiyEn" in the spirit of being humble servants of Lord Narayana and His Bhagavatas, partaking of this anubhavam with great joy, while rendering Kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana. They even go to the extent of declaring that each Bhagavata is property of the other and that the latter has the authority to profit from even selling the former for money. This is the spirit in which they render kaimkaryam. The same anubhavam is conveyed in this Daya Satakam tribute, where those who proceed on the path known as Daya Devi attain the city known as Lord Srinivasa's feet and become possessors of undying eternal wealth of ceaseless Bhagavad kaimkaryam. Here, Svami Desikan uses Lord Srinivasa as



upalakShaNam - sparable attribute. The import of this statement is that "nitya dhani" refers to the eternal kaimkaryam rendered by the liberated jIvan upon traversing the path known as Daya Devi (arcirAdi margam) and reaching Sri Vaikuntam. They experience paripUrNa brahma anubhavam just like the nitya sUris, Anantha, GaruDa, and Vishvaksena and joyously render sAma gAnam in the manner of "hau hau". It must be noted that wealth acquired in common parlance is transient in that it can always be lost. Additionally, it could be fraught with danger due to the fact that others who may be envious of this gain for the individual may try to steal it and in the process cause harm to the possessor of this wealth. On the other hand, the "nitya dhani" suffers from no such drawbacks. The wealth of eternal Kaimkarya Sri to Lord Narayana is undiminishing and permanent. No harm comes to one possessing this wealth. The reason for one to acquire this eternal wealth is Daya Devi alone. Svami Desikan's genius lies in the fact that he conveys an important philosophical truth in layman's terms. Every poor man aspires to get rich. In this context an akinchanan (one incapable of the rigors of Bhakti Yoga due to lack of knowledge and strength) is in abject penury seeking to gain the wealth of nitya kaimkaryam. However, when he clings to the feet of Daya Devi, She ensures that he proceeds on the arciradi path and acquires this undying wealth. Suddenly begetting a large sum of money only gives rise to more worries in the spirit of the statement "bhayanivam dhanam". One who gains this is immersed in thoughts of how to invest this money and keep it safe from those who may be inclined to steal it from him. Thus, it gives rise to "satata duHkha samvardanam". That is the wealth gained only gives rise to more sorrow. First off it poses a challenge of how to secure the wealth. Next, all associates and comrades flock to the person who has gained wealth but stay with him only as long as the wealth lasts but desert him when the wealth is expended. Whereas no such issues arise for those conferred with eternal wealth made available by the Daya Devi path. Nobody steals this wealth conferred by Daya Devi. The wealthy one is surrounded by similarly wealthy comrades always encouraging each other in efforts of kaimkaryam and mutually partaking of the delight arising from this kaimkaryam. Furthermore, nobody can separate the liberated jivan from this kaimkaryam. This confers "sumanasAm samArAdhanam" namely bringing great joy. There is never a trace of sorrow. This is the loftiness of the wealth conferred by Daya Devi. We need not do anything except secure Her grace through a surrender to Her feet. Thereby one who is described as "ati kR^ipaNo(a)pi" too begets this greatest wealth of Kaimkarya Sri. What a magnificent transformation brought about by Daya Devi! Again this lofty idea embedded in the doctrine of Saranagati is revealed to us by Svami Desikan. He has

described this in terms of “yati cakravati Pada pattana”. However, it is not inappropriate for us to seek the same benefit through the “Svami Desika pada pattana”. This would bring great delight to PadmAvati TAyAr and Lord ShrInivAsa, whose combined Daya has manifested as the incarnation of Svami Desikan.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“A poor and helpless creature, even that, with no qualification, whatsoever, can yet cling to you Oh Daya Devi; by this means, that creature can hope to cross over the vast ocean of Samsara of many ills (like hunger, thirst, confusion, and grief). The means to reach the Lord’s Abode is then infallible. You are the dam-bridge that takes us to Him. You do so in no time. The whole feat is further heartening because of Your role. If the original helpless hapless creature thus adopts You as the path of passage, it surely reaches, and rests at the feet of Lord Srinivasa; that invincible city as the Upanishads declare. Now this creature has become a permanently affluent being. It is all to Your credit oh Mother! A number of important observations need to be noted in this context.

1. Daya Devi, if resorted to in the mode of surrender is certain to take one to the ultimate goal. The intervening ocean of grief and suffering becomes irrelevant because association with Daya Devi makes for a delicious and delivering experience.

2. One must not confuse this “surrender and clinging to Daya Devi” with any formal surrender mode. The verse has the significance of implying to us the great favor that the Lord’s Daya can confer upon us and enable us to reach the Lord.

3. This set of ten verses is distinguished by Svami Desikan’s extolling of the greatness of the role of Prapatti. While doing so, he emphasizes how Daya Devi even rules over the Lord to help us.

4. It would not be out of place to mention that Svami Desikan, alone among all Acharyas systematized the whole technique of Prapatti or Nyasa Vidya, using every occasion and every possible mode to drive home the point to us. All earlier Acharyas have glorified Prapatti and even adopted it. However, Svami Desikan alone popularized this.”



Slokam 52

अभिमुख भाव संपद् अभि संभविनां भविनां

क्वचिदुपलक्षिता क्वचिद् भङ्गुर गूढ गतिः ।

विमल रसावहा वृषगिरीश दये भवती

सपदि सरस्वतीव शमयत्यघं अप्रतिघम् ॥ ५२ ॥

abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM

kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH|

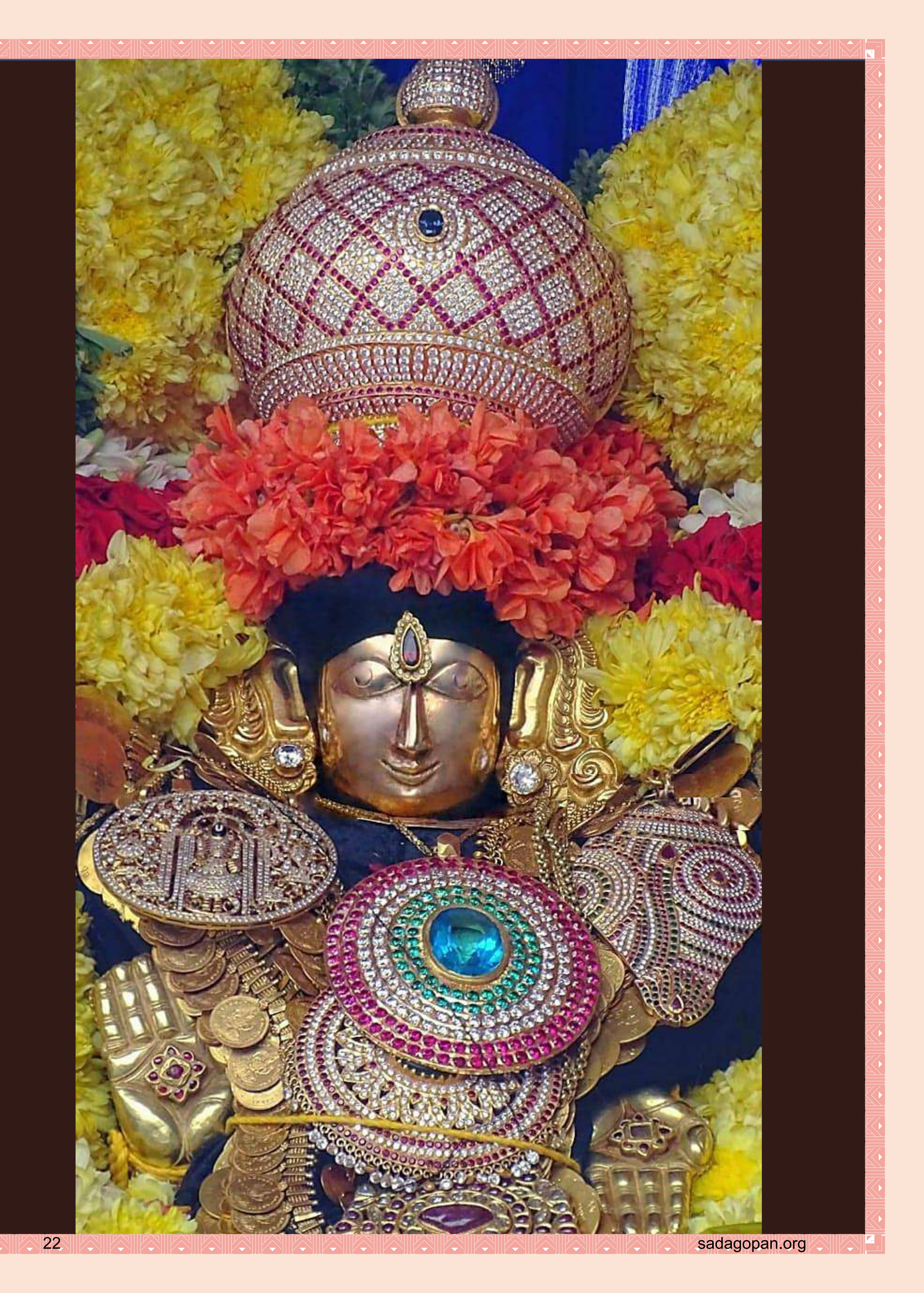
vimala rasAvahA vR^iShagirIsha daye bhavatI

sapadi sarasvatIva shamayatyaghaM apratigham||52



A few preliminary observations about the number 52. This is an important number in the following sense: 5+2=7 denoting the number of khandams of the Krishna Yajur vedam Samhita portion and the number of svarams in the Samavedam. Both of them glorify the Feet of Lord Narayana - the sole refuge for all beings of the universe. 5x2=10 denotes the number of principal Upanishads (Isha, Prashna, Katha, Kena, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, and BrihadaraNyaka). These Upanishads provide instructions in the form of Brahma Vidyas, which form the upasanas for Bhakthi Yogis to attain Kaimkarya Sri for Lord Narayana. 5^(2)=25, which corresponds to the number of aksharams of the dvaya mantram, quintessential for sharaNagati. Again 2^(5)=32 corresponds to the number of Brahma vidyas, outlined in the Upanishads for securing moksham. Since the entire set of ten verses discusses the doctrine of SharaNagati, either Anga Prapatti or Svatantra Prapatti, it is important to remember the above significance of the number 52 in this context.

We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: “The previous verse highlighted the role of Daya Devi that functioned as the path for utterly helpless and totally incapable beings, lacking knowledge and strength, to attain the Dharma Sethu - Lord Narayana, thereby gaining Moksham. This verse discusses the upakaram of Daya Devi for those who may not necessarily seek moksham. However, they may have their sights set on worldly benefits. Even for these beings, Daya Devi grants them what they seek and induces an urge in them



to seek moksham. For example, one may consult an astrologer, who may say that at a certain time one may gain wealth and that one's wedding may take place at a certain other time. If the prediction comes true, there is an immediate building of trust in the words of the astrologer. Influenced by the astrologer, one may resort to visting Temples for the purpose of performing pariharams (rituals to ward off evil effects) for Lord Narayana. Eventually, one may be inclined to seek the benefit of moksham. Svami Desikan declares in this verse that the transformation comes about on account of the grace of Daya Devi. Sometimes this happens explicitly, while at other times it happens, when Daya Devi is hidden from view. This fact is elucidated upon through the analogy to the Saraswati river, which is seen sometimes above the ground and at other times remains underground. This verse is "abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH vimala rasAvahA vR^iShagirIsha daye bhavatI sapadi sarasvatIva shamayatyaghaM apratigham" The flow of the Sarasvati river as well as the flow of Daya Devi are both similar in that they are "vimala rasAvaH" in that they are replete with extremely pure rasam (taste).

In the case of the Saraswati river, the vimala rasa denotes the pure quality of water bereft of any contamination. When it comes to Daya Devi, Her eyeglances are bereft of any trace of sorrow and replete with soothing compassion exuding great joy. Therefore, it is blemishless as described by "vimala rasAvaH" Amidst an ocean of joy, even if there is a trace of sorrow, it takes away from the exuberance. For example, one may be endowed with great wealth and prosperity, the ownership of palatial mansions and not lacking in any worldly comforts. However, he may not have progeny. Thus, his joy comes with a tinge of sorrow in terms of longing for children. Therefore, he may not be able to completely enjoy the good fortune at his disposal. However, the flow of Daya Devi does not even have an infinitesimal association with sorrow. The term vimala comes about as "vighaTaH amala", that which is completely free from dirt. This gives rise to the question "since this means freed from dirt, was it dirty prior to being freed?" That is not the case. Instead it means forever free from dirt or never contaminated by dirt. Other waters may be contaminated and the process of ridding the waters from the contamination can be denoted by "vimala". However, the waters of the Saraswati river remain forever pure. Similarly, the flow of Daya Devi spreads only joy. This is her inherent nature. Even a slightest hint of sorrow takes away from the "vimala" nature of Daya Devi. Therefore, that which is "nitya nirduShTa" ever free of impurities is known as "vimala". When it comes to glorifying Lord Narayana, He is saluted by TiruppAnAzhvAr through the tribute "amalAntipirAn aDiyArkku ennai

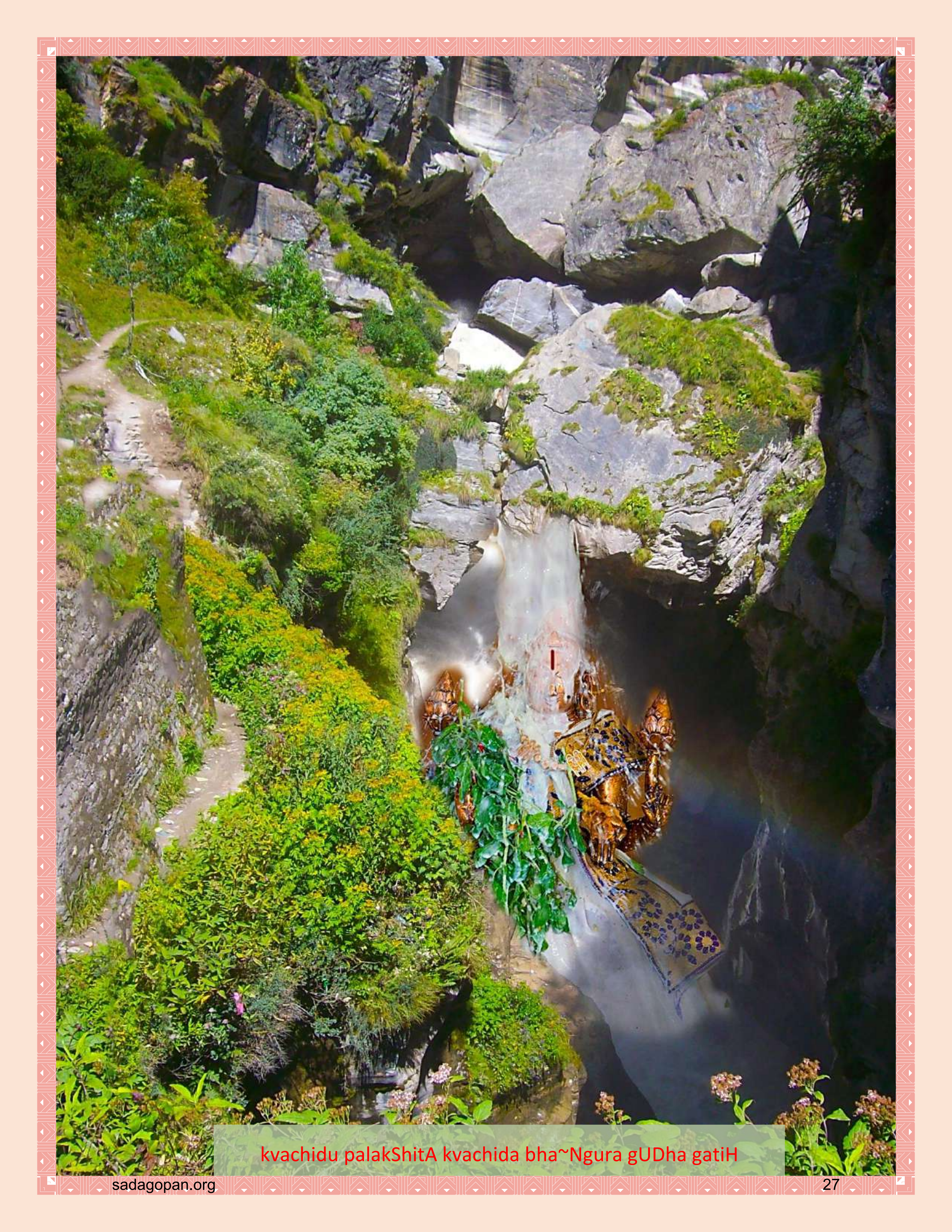
ATpaDutta vimalan”. Again the vimala epithet denotes “nitya nirduShTaH” one who is forever free from impurities. This is the quotation from Svami Desikan’s MunivAhana Bhogam commentary for the amalanAtipirAn pasurams. It is important to note that that beings in samsara at one time or another are associated with impurities and imperfections. Muktas too at one time had such an association. However, the Nitya sUris, who are the eternal residents of Sri Vaikuntam, have never been touched by such blemishes. Therefore, they are vimala. Due to the other viseshanam (inseparable attribute) of “viNNavarkOn”, Lord Narayana functions as the Lord of the Nitya sUris. In a like manner to the Lord, Daya Devi’s flow too is blemishless. Sri Kuresha in his tribute to Thayar declares “tvadIyAnapi duShTabuddhirapi” (Despite being possessed of evil mind and totally lacking in Bhakti, I desire to glorify You oh Mother! As a result of this tribute would anything bad become associated with Thayar?) He proceeds to answer this question through the tribute “nahi sunA liDA(a)pi bhAgIrathi” to denote the fact that the clear flowing waters of the Ganga river are partaken of by a dog that arrives. Does this act on the part of the dog take away from the purity of the Ganga river? Sri Kuresha avers most certainly not. Only the dog quenches its thirst, while the Ganga river remains pristinely pure with no defiling. Mahalakshmi Thayar’s glory is similar to the flow of the pure Ganga water and therefore can never be contaminated. It is only me that satisfies my urge to glorify Thayar declares Sri Kuresha. Returning to the Daya Satakam tribute, the purity of the Sarasvati river remains undiminished. So too is the flow of Daya Devi that spreads joy all round. Therefore, Svami Desikan uses the tribute “vimala rasAvaH” to describe this fact. The Sarasvati river is known as “vimalodaka” in the puraNAs. This is modified as “vimala rasAvaH” in Svami Desikan’s tribute. Where does the Sarasvati river originate? Where does it flow? Which ocean does it merge with? Who has seen this river? The river originates in the northern part of India, commences its southerly flow, before turning back again towards the north and disappears in the Palaya vanam. Recently adiyen read an article where a river was located in Rajasthan at depth of 1 km below the ground. The torrential flow of the river was described as sufficient water to inundate all of Rajasthan. This is the flow of the Sarasvati river.

In the next tribute of this Daya Satakam verse “kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH” Svami Desikan describes the flow of the Sarasvati river as being below the ground and is therefore unseen in those places while at other places it is visible. Even though the river remains hidden from view in some places due to flowing below the earth, there is no room for contamination of the river water. Therefore, the “vimala rasAvaH” nature of the river prevails. In the Triveni

Sangamam the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers can be seen from their white and dark waters respectively. Sarasvati remains here as the antarvAhini. On the other hand, at certain times and places, the Sarasvati river becomes visible. This is the import of the tribute "kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH". In a like manner, the flow of Daya Devi is explicitly visible at times, while at other times, it remains invisible. The inner meaning is that in some instances, the anugraham of Daya Devi becomes known and traceable, while in some others, it remains subtly hidden. Nevertheless, the grace of Daya Devi is ever prevalent. In this context, it becomes important to understand the meaning of hitam and priyam. hitam denotes that which is good for us. priyam denotes that which is liked. Therefore that which is hitam need not necessarily be priyam and vice versa. For example, an individual has sugar issues but is very fond of sweets. However, while this is priyam for him, it is certainly not hitam from the standpoint of his health. In reverse, that which is hitam need not necessarily be priyam. Let's say one needs to undergo surgery in order to get rid of an ailment. Surgery is no doubt hitam from the standpoint of health. However, it is not liked or sought after. Sometimes, when Daya Devi acts for our hitam, Her grace is not explicitly seen. At other times Her actions are pleasing and also meant for our hitam. This is the gati (flow) of Daya Devi. A child is being fed by its mother with great love. However, this does not imply that the mother always offers the child food that the child loves (for example sweets). Instead, the mother feeds the child with food that is nutritive and nourishing. Therefore, as far as the mother is concerned, the well-being of the child (hitam) comes first. Priyam, namely food that the child likes become secondary to her. Likewise, Daya Devi, always has the well-being of Her children in mind and graces them. At times this becomes explicitly visible while at other times it remains masked. However, the important point to be noted here is that merely because Her grace is not explicitly seen, it does not mean that Her grace is non-existent. Instead, it is always present. In the Tiruppavai source commentary, the state of a boy that is angered and hastily leaves the house without partaking of food is described. He takes refuge in a charitable organization, which runs a homeless shelter that offers one meal during the daytime. It is night-time when the boy arrives at the shelter not having partaken of food. His parents are greatly concerned that he has only had a single meal earlier in the day and would be hungry as a result. The boy's mother comes up with a plan to handle this. Knowing that the boy would spurn her offer of food if she went in person, she requests the security guard at the homeless shelter to hand the boy a package containing food by stating that this is the remnant from the morning meal at the shelter. If offered in this manner, the boy is

sure to eat. Therefore, the primary concern of a mother is hitam (that which is good) for her children. Similarly, Daya Devi only worries about hitam for Her children (hapless, suffering baddha jivans enduring the torment of samsara). This being the case, during some instances, we may realize that our well-being has come about on account of the grace of Daya Devi, while in some others, we may not be able to make the explicit association with Daya Devi's grace. Many times, when encountering extreme difficulties, one resorts to cursing the Lord with statements like "Does the Lord have no mercy? Why does He not cast His gaze on me? Why is He allowing me to face extreme hardship? I have been extremely sincere in performing my prescribed duty of Sandhyavandanam. Without fail I perform daily Tiruvaradhanam for the Lord commencing with the lighting of the lamp. Despite my being so sincere, never having offended anyone with harsh words, nor uttering any lies, why is the Lord punishing me?" The reason for this state becomes apparent only later on through a realization that the troubles had to come their way in order for them to gain an important benefit. Likewise, the acts of Daya Devi are sometimes explicit, while at others not so in keeping with the tribute "kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH".

So far the gati of Daya Devi has been identified in terms of the flow of the Sarasvati river. Now the benefit arising from this gati of Daya Devi is examined. This becomes apparent in the tribute "abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM". The torrential flow of Daya Devi like the Sarasvati river destroys the sins of those blessed with Lord Narayana's jAyamana kataksham paving the way for their moksham. The subtle message in this tribute also embeds an instruction on how to perform snAnam in rivers such as Sarasvati. Specifically, while performing nadi snAnam, one must face the direction opposite to the natural flow (abhimukha). One must view the flow of the river water in this manner, while performing nadhi snAnam. The flow of water must be from our front to rear and not in the opposite manner. For example, the Kaveri river flows in the southern direction in Srirangam. Therefore, in conformance with the instruction from Svami Desikan, one needs to be north facing while performing snAnam here. With respect to the Sarasvati river, when the flow is in the southern direction, one must perform snAnam facing north. When the river flows in the northern direction, one must perform snAnam facing the south direction. When it comes to the anugraham of Daya Devi, this must be received facing Her so that one becomes privy to Her compassionate eyeglances. Next, the term sampat is examined. Those who gain the extraordinary wealth denoted by the "kataksham of Daya Devi", are described through the statements "vipado naiva vipadaH sampado naiva sampadaH"



kvachidu palakShitA kvachida bha~Ngura gUDha gatiH

“vipadbhiH asmaraNam viShNoH sampat tasyaiva samsR^itiH”. Namely that which is viewed commonly as hardship is truly not hardship, while that which is denoted as wealth in common parlance is truly not wealth. For example, one may hurt oneself through a fall, or may end up losing money due to some unfortunate circumstance or may experience bereavement due to passing away of near and dear ones. These would in common parlance denote hardship. On the other hand, excelling in studies, doing well financially, being well endowed with property and the like are symbolic of wealth. However, these do not denote hardship or wealth. Instead, true hardship is defined to be “vipadbhiH asmaraNam viShNoH” (not contemplating on Lord Narayana through His numerous names). Thus, those who fail to contemplate on Lord Narayana through His glorious namas are steeped in the darkness of nescience and thus endure great hardship. True wealth is defined to be “sampath tasyaiva samsR^itiH” namely one engaged in constant contemplation of the Lord’s names is really wealthy. This is the meaning underlying the tribute “abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM”. Tirukacchi Nambi, who rendered fan service (TiruvAlavaTTa kaimkaryam) to Lord Varadaraja, declares in the DevarAja AShTakam: “tvadIkShaNa sudhA sindhu vIci vikShepa shIkaraiH kAruNya mArutAnItaiH shItalaIrabhiShi~nca mAm” (I am Your child awaiting to be bathed. My desire is to be drenched in the torrential flow of a nectarine shower of Your compassionate grace, which is soothing and cooling.) Svami Desikan conveys a similar anubhavam in the DevanAyaka PancAshat salutation “ArdrIbhavAmyamR^ita varSha nibhairapA~NgaiH” (The torrential flow of Lord Devanayaka’s grace is such that it is a nectarine shower, that draws one to the Lord like a magnet and is only overflowing, even if the recipient wants it to stop!). One who becomes a receptacle to this divine Kataksham is glorified in the Daya Shatakam tribute “abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM.

In common parlance when one begets wealth, it is standard practice to examine the reason for this affluence as well the benefits that arise from this wealth. In a like manner, one needs to examine the reason for the “abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM” as well as its attendant benefits. The reason for acquiring this wealth is “sukR^ita phalam”, namely the result of some previous pious act on one’s part. All wealth currently in our possession is due to some prior pious act. Once the effect of this pious act is completely expended, what follows next is only hardship. The only way to avert this is documented in the statement “pAtrapANi kamalArpaNa vAsatAm” (If one engages in acts of charity upon identifying the needy ones, it will ensure the well-being of the performer of this act and his progeny). Thus, by giving liberally in charity to the needy ones, one



abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM

can ensure the well-being of oneself and one's progeny. This is the wealth glorified by poets. The reason for this wealth (sampat) is one's sukrutam-some pious act undertaken in a prior birth. Thus, all wealthy ones from a wordly perspective too beget their good fortune as a result of good deeds performed in a prior birth. Hence sampat of any kind is the result of sukrutam is established beyond doubt. Next, sampat is the reason for all manner of pride that accrues to a wealthy individual- be it monetary wealth or wealth of knowledge. The sampat confers bragging rights as well. Additionally, the sampat becomes an object of enjoyment. For example, a wealthy individual is able to travel at will with the comfort of a luxurious car and not having to worry about public transport. This is due to the "sampat". These facts pertaining to "sampat" also prevail when it comes to "daivIka sampat" namely the wealth of Kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana. In order to gain the kataksham of Lord Narayana and Daya Devi, "sukrutam" is necessary. That is one ought to have undertaken a pious act in a prior birth. "shreyo nidhAnam" denotes that which is the cause of pride. For example in the MukundamAla stotram Svami Kulashekara Azhvar declares "tvadbhR^ityabhR^itya paricAaraka bhR^ityabhR^itya bhR^ityasya bhR^itya iti mAM smara lokanAtha"(It is a matter of great pride to call myself the servant of a servant of a servant of Lord Narayana). The reason for this pride is the "daivIka sampat" of kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana. This sampat is also an object of delectable enjoyment. "nityAbhivancita paraspara nIca bhAvaiH" This "abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM" is made available to those who focus their prayers on Lord Srinivasa alone to the exclusion of all other deities. Even in the direst of circumstances, if one maintains the Mahavishvasam that Lord Srinivasa will never forsake them, those individuals are graced with the "daivIka sampat" of nitya kaimkaryam. One who engages in the worship of all devatas, without discrimination, runs the risk of not being protected by anyone, since each devata could presume that the responsibility of protecting the individual belongs to another devata. Thus, only when the trust is placed in a single devata can one be assured of protection. Therefore, to gain the "abhimukha bhAva saMpat", one needs to focus one's attention on Lord Narayana to the exclusion of all other deities. It is important to note that this statement is made in the spirit of nahi-nindha nyAyam. The next tribute "abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM" denotes a visesha utpati - namely one who begets a birth wherein the individual is singularly devoted to Lord Narayana, is blessed with daivIka sampat. When it comes to the matter of Sarasvati river, the anugraha visesham is described in terms of "abhimukha bhAva saMpad abhi saMbhavinAM bhavinAM". Most rivers, the Ganga included, merge with the ocean and lose their identity at that point. However,

Sarasvati river commences Her flow in the southern direction and graces all those who bathe in the river. However, in Her anxiety to grace anyone who may have been accidentally left behind, She reverses course and flows again in the northern direction. The anugraham of the Sarasvati river is described as "shamayatyaghaM apratigham" namely that which is hard to destroy is effortlessly destroyed. Svami Desikan completes the analogy by noting that Daya Devi in a like manner effortlessly exterminates the sin-pile of those who are steeped in samsaram, which is hard to destroy. pratigham means that which cannot be destroyed. apratigham



denotes that which is easily destroyed. pratigham also denotes anger. This gives rise to tApam. apratigham denotes that which relieves tApam. This is the relief provided by the Sarasvati river. In the context of Daya Devi, the anger denotes the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana, which results in punishment for errant jivans. Daya Devi brings about a dramatic change in that She ruthlessly destroys the sin-pile of Her Saranagatas, thereby eliminating the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana. Furthermore, this nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana is transformed into anugraha sankalpam, thereby securing the Lord's grace for the Saranagata. Next the tribute "sapadi shamayati" is examined. This attests to the fact that one's sins are destroyed the very moment one performs a snAnam in the Sarasvati river.

Likewise, when one begets the kataksham of Daya Devi, one's sins are destroyed at that very moment. There is absolutely no waiting time."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.V. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "There is great virtue in being with the Lord and abiding by His commands. All our ills arise on account of being recalcitrant, disobedient children to our Father-Lord Narayana. To act strictly according to His scriptured mandates is "anukUlya sankalpa" referred to in this verse as abhimukha stance. It amounts to a great "sampat" or affluence. If we attain this status, the response of Daya Devi is a cool, kindly graciousness. Possibly we may not be always, consistently experiencing it; that is because She is like the proverbial Sarasvati flow, mostly subterranean. Surely Daya Devi quells our sins, that would otherwise be impossible to wipe out.

1. This verse employs a double entendre between Sarasvati river and Daya Devi's cool flow.

2. Present day students can gain an important lesson here. He may have placed implicit faith in Srinivasa Daya. He may have experienced the impact of this too. But nevertheless, he may sometimes miss it. Sarasvati flow is the upamana.

3. Interestingly, the Sarasvati here is sought to be identified as Yatiraja, Svami Bhashyakarar. Specifically, the Sri Suktis of Svami Bhashyakarar are described as Yatiraja Sarasvati. Svami Desikan greatly extols these in the Yatiraja Saptati stotram as the means for rooting out all sins."



Slokam 53

अपि करुणे जनस्य तरुणेन्दु विभूषणताम्

अपि कमलासन त्वमपि धाम वृषाद्रि पतेः।

तरतमता वशेन तनुते ननु ते विततिः

परहित वर्ष्मणा परि पचेलिम केलिमती ॥ ५३ ॥

api karuNe janasya taruNendu vibhUShaNatAm

api kamalAsana tvamapi dhAma vR^iShAdri pateH|

taratamatA vashena tanute nanu te vitatiH

parahita varShmaNA pari pachelima kelimatI||53



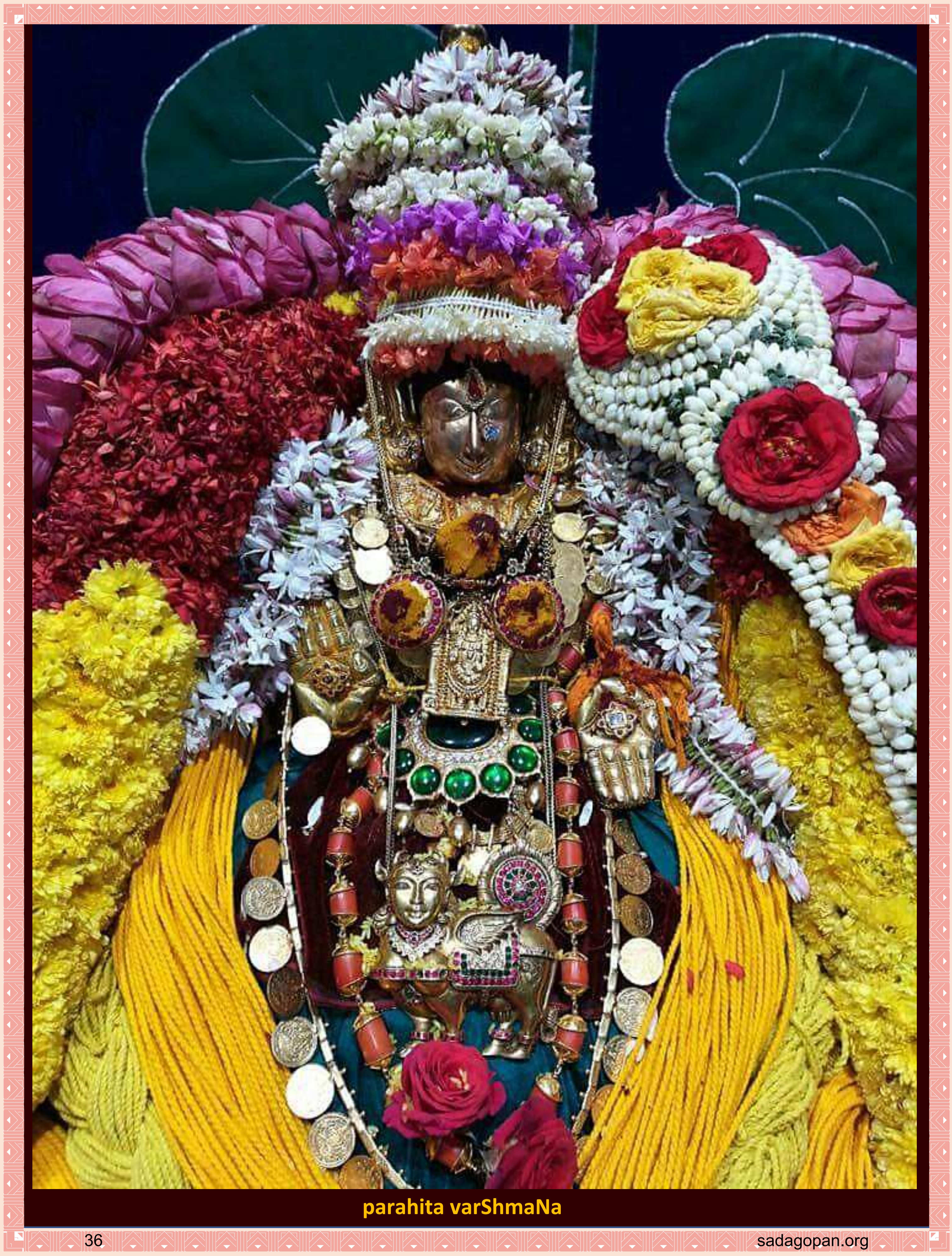
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin "Three Slokams prior, the anugraham of Daya Devi in Her incarnation as an Acharya was illustrated. Her upakaram in the process of Saranagati as the Archiradi path was highlighted in verse 51. The previous verse exposited on the fact that at times Her grace is explicitly seen and at other times not so, in the manner of the flow of the Sarasvati river. So far, the exposition has been geared towards the goal of Moksham. This is undoubtedly true for mumukshus (those desirous of gaining Moksham). If everyone was transformed into a mumukshu, there would be none left in the category of ordinary beings, who have adopted a laukika life and engaged in tasks like office work and the like. Is there anything in this for common folks? Can they become privy to the anugraham of Daya Devi or is Her grace meant exclusively for mumukshus? It is well known that "Arogyam bhAskArAd icCet shriyam icCet hutAshanAt IshvarAt j~nyAnam icCet mokSham icCEt janArdanAt". That is, if one is unwell, offering prayers to Surya through Surya namaskaram confers robust health. Worship of Agni confers wealth. Knowledge can be gained by worshipping Lord Siva. Moksham is gained by worship of Lord Janardana (Narayana). However, this can lead to the interpretation that Lord Narayana confers moksham alone. Some may think, that they do not desire moksham. Instead, they seek out good health, an abundance of wealth, and vast encyclopedic knowledge. Would Lord Narayana confer these or does one have to resort to devatAntaras for these benefits? If the Lord does not grant these, then His words become untrue. It is helpful to remember

here the Bhagavad Gita tribute “caturvidhA bhajante mAm” (People come to Lord Krishna seeking four types of benefit - dharma, artha, kAma, and moksha).



“Arto jij~nAsu arthArthi j~nAnI ca bharata R^iShabha” is another Bhagavad Gita salutation that becomes relevant here. (To those seeking wealth Lord Krishna grants this in abundance. To those seeking kaivalyam - the enjoyment of one’s own Atma, Lord Krishna grants them this benefit.) It must be borne in mind that the cause for the Lord granting these purusharthas is Daya Devi. Thus, would the Lord, who confers the elevated boon of moksham, not be capable of granting these other lesser purusharthas? If Moksham is analogous to a million-dollar reward, which is readily granted by Lord Narayana to desirous ones, would He not be able to confer these other purusharthas, which are equivalent to pennies? This is known as kaimutika nyAyam. In this verse, Svami Desikan affirms that the other purusharathas too come about due to the grace of Daya Devi. This verse is “api karuNe janasya taruNendu vibhUShaNatAm api kamalAsana tvamapi dhAma vR^iShAdri pateH taratamatA vashena tanute nanu te vitatiH parahita varShmaNA pari pachelima kelimatI”

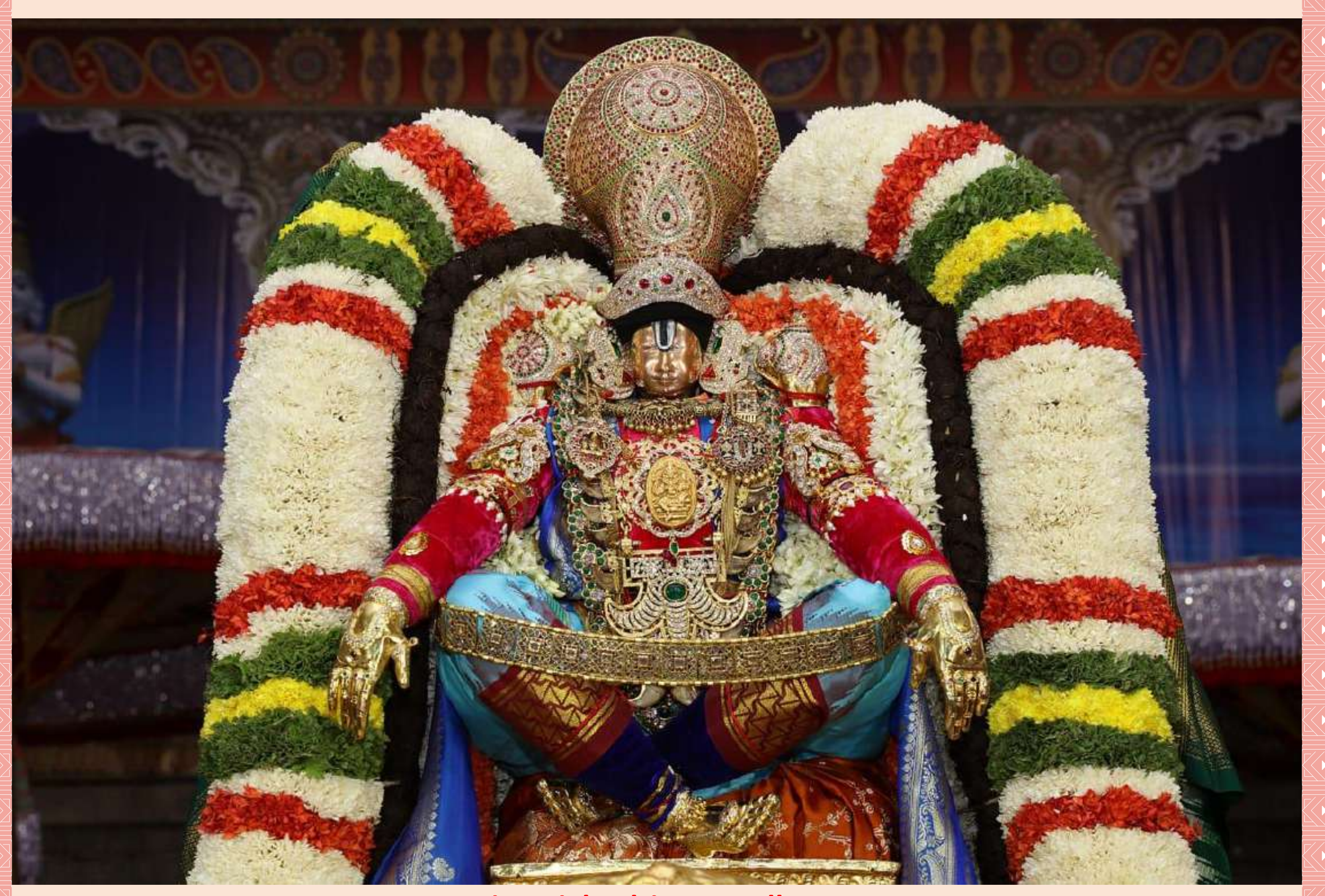
The sambodhanam here is "Oh KaruNa! (Daya Devi)". She is described as adorning a kavacham (armour). This is due to "parahita varShmaNA" that is only acting in a manner that ensures the well-being of all. Namely, Her body itself has taken a form meant for acting in the interest of the well-being of others. In a subsequent verse Svami Desikan declares "hitamiti jagaddR^iShTyA kluptaIraklupta phalantaraiH" to denote the fact that regardless of how Daya Devi's actions are perceived according to common world standards of being well disposed or otherwise, She always acts in a manner that ensures one's well-being. Daya Devi of such disposition, performs the act of "parahita varShmaNA pari pachelima kelimatI" Her sport is such that it reaches a climax according to an analogy with a soccer match where anticipation builds up as to whether the player in control of the ball will score a goal. It needs to be borne in mind that the compassionate eyeglances of Daya Devi are responsible for anyone begetting all manner of worldly gains. The prose order (anvaya kramam) for the tribute "pari pachelima kelimatI taratamatA vashena tanute nanu te" yields the meaning that Daya Devi confers worldly benefits to all comers commensurate with their bhakthi towards Her/Lord Narayana. This is a sport for Daya Devi/Lord Narayana. In the shrI stuti tribute "pashyantIShu shrutiShu paritaH sUribR^indena sArdhaM madhye kR^itya triguNaphalakaM nirmitasthAna bhedam vishvAdhIsha praNayini sadA vibhramadyUta vR^ittau brahmeshAdyA dadhati yuvayorakShashAra pracAram" Svami Desikan observes that Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi Thayar are engaged in a game of chess. This chess match has numerous spectators. The spectators include the Vedas and the Nitya sUris. The piece movement in a chess game is critical as is well known and is governed by well-established rules that cannot be violated. The chessboard is prakR^iti, which is replete with the three guNas, Satva, Rajas, and Tamas as evidenced by the "triguNa phalakam" tribute. Jivans including those occupying the elevated states of Brahma and Siva are pieces in this chess game. The "sthAna bhedam" tribute in the shrI stuti denotes the states of Indra, Rudra, and Brahma as the movement of black and white pieces of the chess game that the Lord and His Consort engage in. Again, it must be borne in mind that this game is being played in strict accordance with the governing rules. (The inner meaning is that the sport of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe are engaged in by the Divine Couple in strict accordance with the Sastraic prescriptions). All benefits are conferred to jivans in complete conformance with their karma. Whose game is this? Undoubtedly Lord Narayana's. Implicit herein is that this is the sport of the Lord and Daya Devi's kataksham. What happens when Daya Devi's sport reaches a climax? This is described in the tribute "pari pachelima



parahita varShmaNa

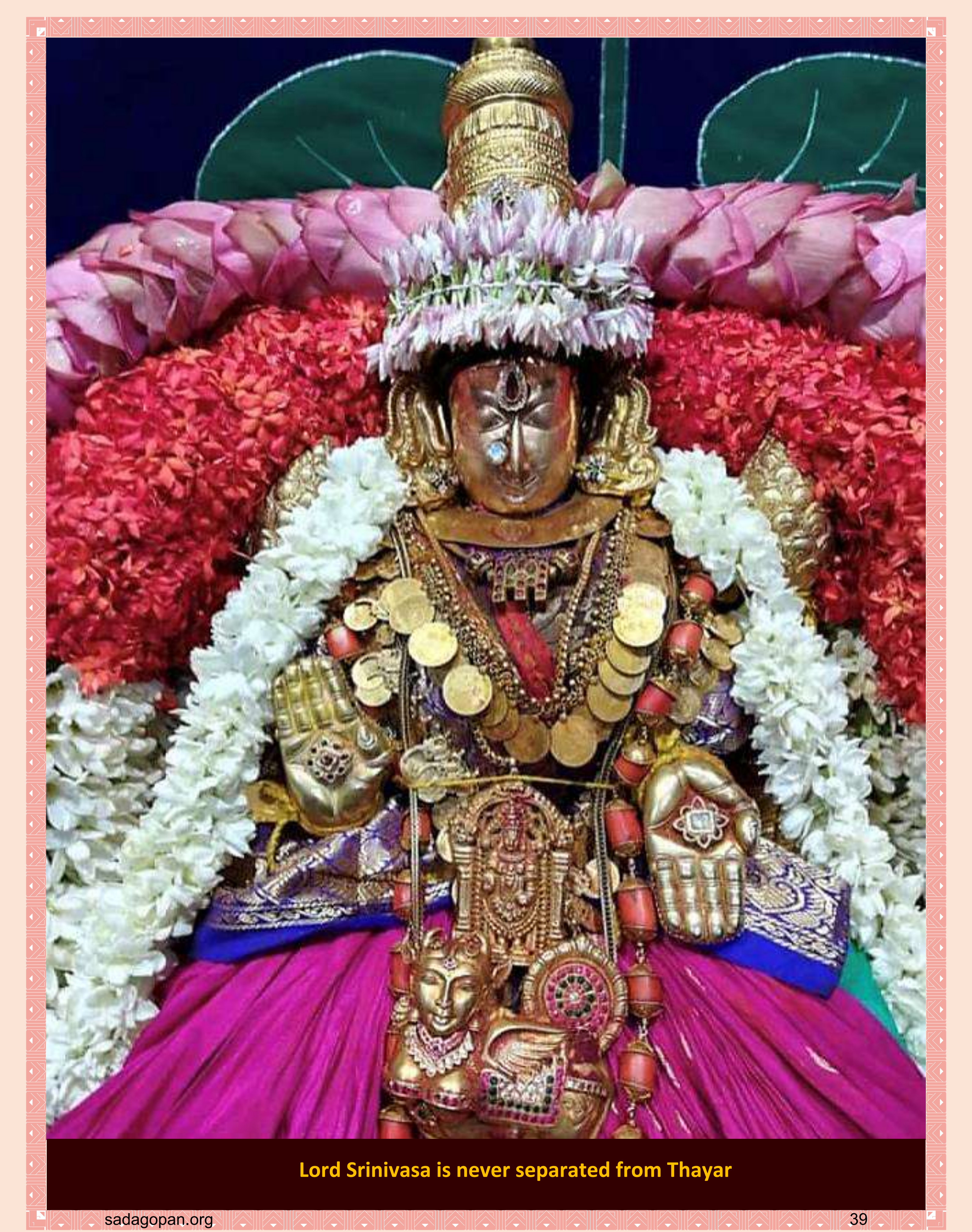
kelimatI taratamatA vashena tanute nanu te" This tribute can be exposited upon through an analogy. There is a king who has a large army. A foot soldier in his army is making progress one step at a time. In time, the foot soldier attains the status of a minister in the king's court. This is a significant change in his fortunes. Likewise, Daya Devi ensures every jivan begets elevation according to karma and at one point ensures that the jivan attains moksham enabling permanent residence in Sri Vaikuntam. This confers upon these beings lasting fame and wealth. Thus, the entire process of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe is a chess game engaged in by the Divine Couple. This game is played according to a fixed set of rules (shastras). Each being in the universe begets a status in accordance with accrued karma. Even in this process, Svami Desikan declares that their attainment of a given state is in direct proportion to their bhakti towards Daya Devi. Daya Devi grants everything Her seeker yearns for. This verse is characterized by the use of the term "api" in three instances - "api taruNendu vibhUShaNatAm" "api kamalAsana tvam" and "api dhAma vR^iShAdri pateH". The first "api" is a reference to the one who bears the crescent moon on his head - namely Lord Siva. The implication is that Lord Siva attains his elevated status "sarvaj~nan aana ahirbudhnya bhagavan" and "mahAdevan" due to performance of the sarva medhe yaj~nam, where he offered himself as the havis - in accordance with the tribute "sarvamedhe mahAtma hutvA AtmAmanam deva deva babhUva"" due to the grace of Daya Devi. His role as the destroyer also comes about due to the anugraaham of Daya Devi. Next "kamalAsanatvam api" is examined. This pertains to the elevated status of Brahma, whose origin is the navel lotus of Lord Narayana. In order to attain this status, extraordinary tapas needs to be performed in accordance with the eulogy "yugakoTi sahasrANi viShNumArAdhya padma bhUH traIlokya dhAtR^itvam prApnavAn iti". The intense aradhanam for Lord Narayana performed in a sustained manner for 100 billion yugams results in one begetting the elevated status of Chaturmukha Brahma. Again, this comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi. The final "api" is the reference to "api vR^iShAdri pateH dhAma", namely the place of residence of the Lord of Seven Hills. The implication here is that attaining residence at the feet of Lord Srinivasa is also a benefit conferred by Daya Devi. Thus, begetting the elevated status of Siva is a lofty goal. Attaining this state is quite demanding and calls for considerable effort on the part of the aspirant. Even more arduous is the requirement for begetting the status of Brahma, who is sought after by the Devas whenever they encounter difficulties. Attaining the feet of Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root at the Vrushabhadri hill is no mean feat either. These purusharthas, are granted by Daya Devi to those who

seek these benefits. Thus, whether one desires to have the status of Brahma, Rudra, or Indra, or become extremely wealthy, it is imperative for that being to have the grace of Daya Devi. The conferring of this status is in direct proportion to one's effort and bhakthi towards Daya Devi.



api vR^iShAdri pateH dhAma

In the Gunaratna kosham, Sri Parashara Bhattar highlights the glory of Thayar. He declares that Lord Narayana, no doubt is hailed as Parabrahmam. How did this come about? Sri Bhattar answers this through the tribute "apAngA bhUyaMso yadupari paraM brahma tadabhUt" namely one who has an abundance of the kataksham of Thayar is known as Para Brahmam. This is also mirrored in Svami NammAzhvar's saranagati tribute to Lord Srinivasa in the Pasuram "akalakillEn iRaiyum enRu alarmElmankai uRai mArbA nikaril pugazhAi ulakam mUnRuDaiyAi yennai ALvAnE nikaril amarar muni kaNankaL virumbum TiruvEnkaTattAnE pukazhonRillA aDiyEn un aDikkIzh amarntu pukuntEne". This tribute refers to the fact that Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Thayar.



Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Thayar

Therefore, He is graced with an abundance of kataksham from Thayar. Thus, He is glorified as Parabrahmam. One who receives the kataksham of Thayar in smaller measures begets the status of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra. Hence, one's fame and wealth is a direct measure of the kataksham they have from Daya Devi, who is no different from Thayar. Consequently, a mere glance of Daya Devi is capable of conferring on an individual all worldly benefits (aihika phalam), while those receiving Her kataksham in greater measure are blessed with the status of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra (AmuShmika phalam), while those who receive Daya Devi's kataksham in even greater measure are blessed with the boon of moksham resulting in eternal kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple in Sri Vaikuntam. It may be asked what is the import of this verse? This needs to be understood in the manner of Daya Devi leading one along in their own desired path by granting them everything they wish for and eventually, encouraging them to seek moksham, thus ensuring their well-being once and for all. This is illustrated through a discussion between a Brahmana and his son. The father instructs the son "Do not worry about school. Instead, I shall enroll you in the Patashala, where you can undertake Veda adhyayanam." The boy responds, "What future will I have if I receive traditional Patashala eduction?" The father replies, "The Supreme Lord, Narayana, who has planted this tree (you) will definitely not fail to water it. Thus, Lord Narayana, engaged in the sport of Srushti has created beings in the universe. Protecting them automatically becomes his responsibility. Why do you think you have to do something in this regard?" Such a discussion may be appropriate for those inclined towards Vedantam. However, for those who are not inclined in this manner, the appropriate discussion would be along the lines of "OK. Go to school during the day. In the evening hours I shall teach you various stotrams." Accordingly, the boy is instructed in various stotrams after returning from school. After a while, the instruction proceeds towards adhyayanam. Thus, in a step-by-step manner, in accordance with one's aptitude and ability, instructing them in "sat vishayam" (good knowledge) is a task that is carried out. For example, instructing the boy in the principle that everything good that comes about is due to the grace of one's Acharya. Daya Devi too operates in the same manner. Instead of pointing one to moksham in one fell swoop, She undertakes a gradual transformation of the individual in keeping with their ability and disposition to reform them and encourage them to seek moksham. This is done by granting them all they desire at the appropriate time in order to inspire trust in Daya Devi, namely that She can be reliably approached to seek anything, and She will not deny them. Thus, Daya Devi grants all worldly benefits to Her seekers, and even the elevated status of Brahma,



Rudra, and Indra, which in relative terms is even greater than any conceivable material riches and eventually leads them to the greatest divya sampat (Divine wealth) of lasting kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa through moksham. Thus, She is the instrumental cause for one to seek moksham. May this lofty Daya Devi grace us all with lasting Kaimkarya Sri."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "Oh Daya Devi! You condescend to confer on Your devotees the great seat of Rudra; or even the more coveted seat of Brahma. Let alone these, even the supreme goal of attaining Paramapada, the world of Lord Venkatesha is granted by You. These are all manifestation to different degrees of Your sportive display of Your power-conferment, albeit depending on the state of ripeness of the efforts of each individual, thus necessitating a gradation or ranking on merits.

1. It may be asked that earlier verses dwelt on crossing over the samsara ocean, that is they pertain to attaining moksha. Why then is Shiva's throne or Brahma's post exposited here? This is meant by way of assurance to everyone that Daya Devi is capable of granting anything. Indeed, when She is capable of granting the ultimate wealth of moksha samrajyam, can She not confer lesser things?

2. The key and beautiful reference here "parahita varShmaNa" needs to be observed. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi's physical body can be pictured as being made of the material-the good of others.

3. An uninitiated one may wonder and argue "Would Daya Devi grant all I want?" The answer is "If one is sincere, pious, earnest, and consistent, Daya Devi is pleased and will grant what one deserves. She will never let one down. However, She would grant according to one's merits, according to one's puNya, and in proportion to the ripening of one's good deeds."



Slokam 54

धृत भुवना दये त्रिविध गत्यनुकूलतरा
वृषगिरि नाथ पाद परिरम्भवती भवती ।
अविदित वैभवाऽपि सुर सिन्धुरिवातनुते
सकृदवगाहमानमपतापमपापमपि ॥ ५४ ॥

dhR^ita bhuvanA daye trividha gatyanukUlatarA
vR^iShagiri nAtha pAda parirambhavatI bhavatI|
avidita vaibhavApi sura sindhuri vAtanute
sakR^idavagAhamAnamapatApamapApamapi||54



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

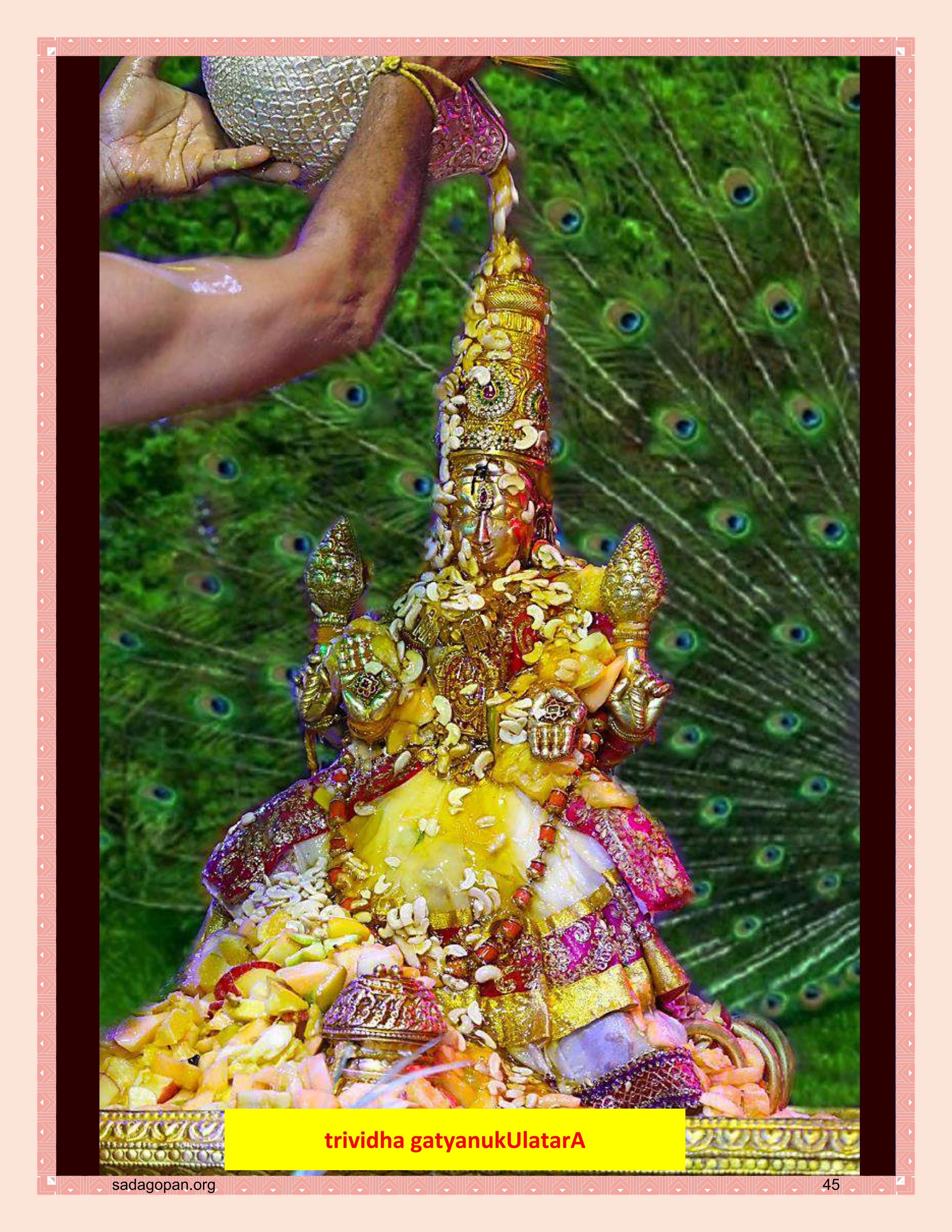
"This verse is "dhR^ita bhuvanA daye trividha gatyanukUlatarA vR^iShagiri nAtha pAda parirambhavatI bhavatI avidita vaibhavApi sura sindhuri vAtanute sakR^idavagAhamAnamapatApamapApamapi" In two slokams prior, Svami Desikan presented the similarity between the Sarasvati river and Daya Devi. Sarasvati river is none other than Sarasvati Devi, the consort of Brahma, that has manifested as a river. Just as the Sarasvati river is visible in certain places and flows below the ground in certain other places, the anugraham of Daya Devi is explicitly seen in some instances, while remaining subtly hidden in other instances. However, Daya Devi's anugraham for all beings is constant be it explicit or implicit. Recognizing that Sarasvati Devi is the consort of Chaturmukha Brahma, Svami Desikan devoted the next verse to highlight the role of Daya Devi in conferring the status of Brahma. Likewise, the elevated status of Siva too comes about on account of the anugraham of Daya Devi. Brahma and Siva are alluded to in Svami Alavandar's Chatushloki tribute "brahmeshAdi suravrajaH sadayitastvatdAsa dAsI gaNaH (Brahma, Siva, Indra, along with their consorts are Your servants, oh Mother SrI!)" Due to this fact, Svami Desikan was not satisfied with the depiction of the similarity between Daya Devi and the Sarasvati river. Therefore, in this verse and the next, Svami Desikan highlights the similarity between the Ganga river, which is superior to the Sarasvati river, and Daya Devi. "dhR^ita bhuvanA daye trividha gatyanukUlatarA" denotes the fact that the Ganga river enjoys a status greater than



praNata pratikUlamUlaghAtI

that of the Sarasvati river, while Daya Devi occupies a status even greater than that of the Ganga river. Daya Devi is compassion unlimited. For this to hold, there must be a flow of compassion. Instead, if it remains constrained as in the case of water in a lake, it is of no use. The implication is that Daya Devi's eye-glances must fall on everyone and spread compassion. Even being like a river is insufficient. This is because the river becomes useful only when it is replete with water. There are rivers like Vegavati and Palar. The latter may not have water all the time, whereas even the location of Vegavati is unknown. The rivers may even be puNya nadis. However, bereft of water, they serve no purpose. In this instance, Svami Desikan uses the tribute "dhR^ita bhuvanA" to denote the Ganga river, which always bears water due to being a jIva nadi. It spreads great joy to those who bathe in the river. bhuvana refers to the entire universe, including all the sentient and insentient beings. Lord Narayana undertakes the task of creating this universe at the behest of Daya Devi. Not only that, He also inherits the task of sustaining the universe again due to the instruction of Daya Devi. Therefore, Daya Devi is instrumental for creation as well as the sustenance of the universe. This was discussed in detail in verse 17 of the Daya Satakam through the tribute "acidavishiShTAn praLaye jantUn avalokyjAta nirvedA". Furthermore, the tribute from verse 19 "karuNe sukhayasi vinatAn kaTAkSha viTapaiH karApaceya phalaiH", it becomes apparent that Daya Devi brings great joy to all beings of the universe when they live under the protection of Her compassionate eyeglances. She is also responsible for the Lord's act of Pralaya according to the Daya Satakam verse 24 tribute "praNata pratikUlamUlaghAtI". Thus, Daya Devi, who is instrumental in the Lord undertaking the sportive acts of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe, is glorified here in terms of "dhR^ita bhuvanA". Namely, Lord Narayana seeking refuge in Daya Devi, performs the act of sustenance of the entire universe. Thus, it is immaterial whether Daya Devi or Lord Narayana is referred to as the one sustaining the universe. In keeping with this line of thought, Svami Desikan salutes Daya Devi as the one that is performing the task of sustenance of the universe in this verse.

Next, we focus on the tribute "trividha gatyanukUlatarA". This denotes the three boons conferred by Daya Devi - aisvaryam (wealth), kaivalyam (experience of the self) and puruShArtham (moksham). That is, She is the cause for beings of the universe to attain trividhagati, the three states mentioned herein. If one salutes Daya Devi with folded hands even once, and that too from a distance, She grants them everything they seek. She acts in a way to ensure the well-being (hitam) of Her seekers, while at the same time carrying out this task in a pleasing manner



trividha gatyanukUlatarA

(priyam) in keeping with the salutation "kasmaicidanjali bharaM vahate vitIrya" from Verse 58 of SrI Parasara Bhattar's Gunaratna kosham. An ordinary being while passing by Thayar's Sannidhi offers his salutations with folded hands in anjali mudra. Beholding this, Thayar resolves "this individual has performed the great task of saluting Me with folded hands. I must definitely shower him with My grace." Thereby, Thayar grants him all the riches, as well as Kaivalyam and stands ready to point him to the path of Moksham, if he desires. Svami Parasara Bhattar describes this act of Thayar as "asmai na kinciducitaM kR^itamityathAmba!" (Gunaratna Kosham Verse 58) to denote the fact that Thayar is greatly moved by the act of submitting the prayer with folded hands and decides that "This man has performed the great task of submitting his prayer in anjali mudra. I have not done anything for him. Therefore, I must answer his prayer in a hurry." This tribute captures the essential nature of Daya Devi as described by Svami Desikan through the "trividha gatyanukUlatarA" salutation. This is due to the fact that Thayar is no different from Daya Devi as discussed previously in verse 6 of the Daya Satakam "samastajananIM vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm". We note here again in summary that if a suitable form were to be assigned to the Daya guNam of Lord Srinivasa, it would only be Mahalakshmi Thayar. Due to this equivalence, it must be borne in mind that all references to Thayar are necessarily references to Daya Devi. To emphasize the point that Daya Devi grants all material benefits and Kaivalyam in addition to Moksham, it is helpful to visualize a Temple, which prominently advertises that the "Lord Here only grants Moksham. There is no room for someone seeking trivial benefits. Only those seeking Bhagavad Kaimkaryam and Moksham are welcome". One can count on one's fingertips the number of people that would visit this temple. It is common to look for aihika phalam (material benefits) prior to seeking Moksham. On the other hand, due to the lack of such advertisement, all seekers of Daya Devi are graced with whatever they desire and in time are led on the path to Moksham. Now, we examine the similarity between Ganga river and Daya Devi. The Ganga River too has three kinds of gati - antarikSham, pAtALam, and bhUmi characterizing Her flow in the upper regions, on the earth, and below the earth. That is the flow of the Ganga river, which originated at the Feet of Lord Narayana during the Trivikrama avataram, takes place in three worlds. In SrI Varadaraja stavam verse 62, Svami Kuresa upon glorifying Lord Varadaraja's feet describes the Ganga river, which originates from Lord Varadaraja's feet in the tribute "tvatpAdAbje prajAtA surasaridabhavat prAkcaturdhA tatastA svekAM dhatte dhruvaH sA tribhuvanamapunAt trIn patho bhavayantI tatraIkA khaM vrajantI shivayati tu shivaM sa punaH satpadhA(a)bhUt

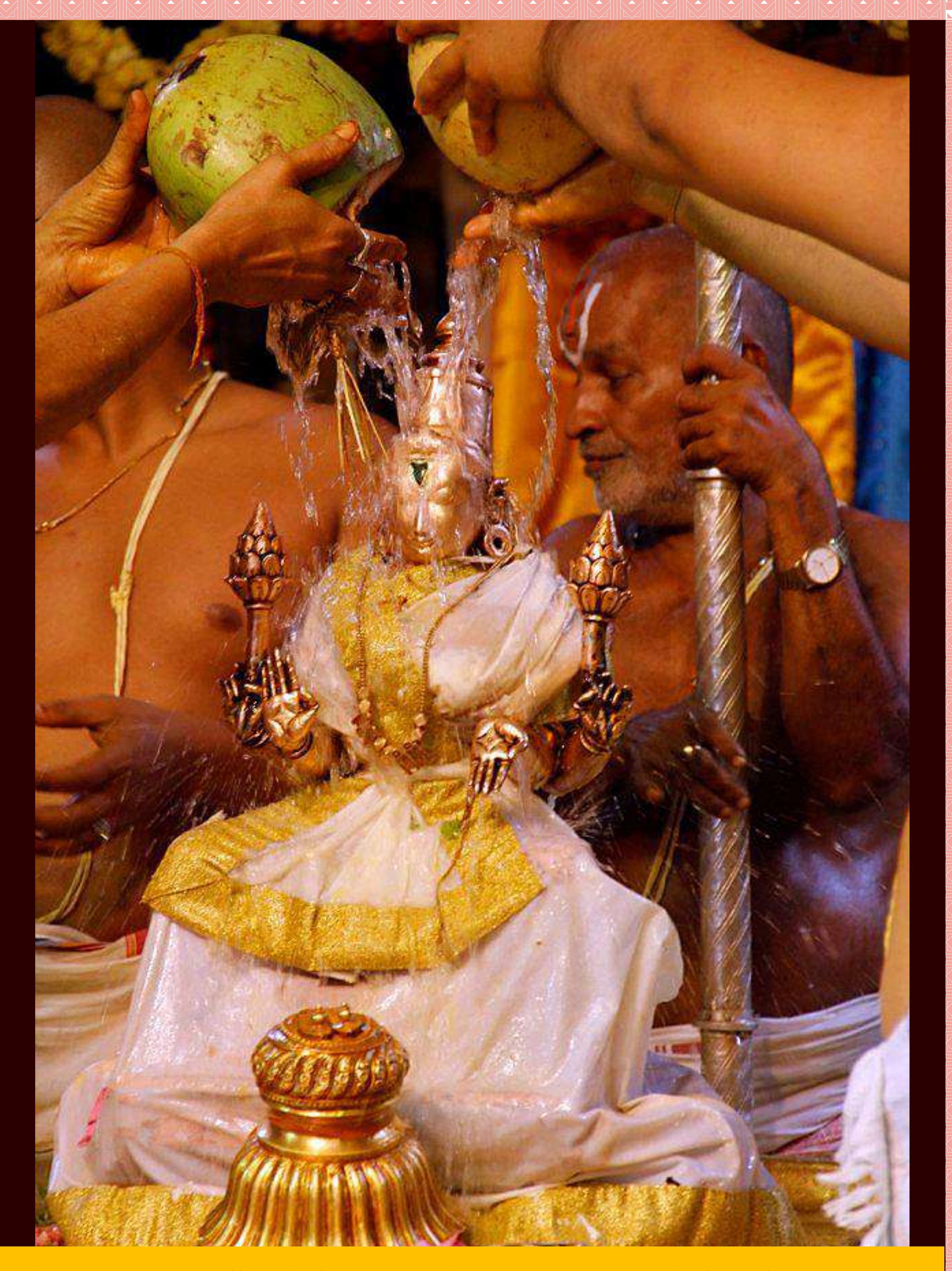
tAsvekA gAM punAnA varada! sagarajasvargasargaM cakAra." Sri Tirumazhisai Azhvar in the NAnmukan tiruvantAti (pAsuram 9) salutes Ganga in the pasuram "kuRai koNDu nAnmukan kuNDikainIr peitu maRai koNDa mantirattAl vAzhtti kaRai koNDa kaNDattAn cenni mEl ERakkazhuvinAn aNDattAn cEvaDiyai Anku" Tirumazhisai Azhvar's tributes in both Nanmukan tiruvantAti as well as the Tiruccanta viruttam unambiguously establishes the Para tattvam of Lord Narayana. In these tributes the Azhvar hits the nail on the head so to speak by bringing out the import of the Vedas and establishing beyond doubt that Lord Narayana is the Para Brahman. One should not associate this reference with any other deity. The import of this Pasuram is that under the pretext of measuring the three paces of land, Lord Trivikrama's foot covered the upper regions all the way to Satyalokam, the residence of Brahma. Lord Brahma performed abhishekam for this foot uttering the PuruSha sUktam in keeping with the tribute PuruShena PuruSha sUktAm, highlighting the importance of PuruSha sUktam. These waters, which were sanctified by contact with the Foot of Trivikrama, fell on the head of Siva, having the blue neck (on account of swallowing the hala-hala poison during the churning of the milky ocean) and rendered him pure. This Ganga River has the characteristic of destroying the sins of all who bathe in her. The waters from the Feet of Trivikrama split into four branches, three of them going towards the upper region, earth, and the netherworld respectively. The waters from the upper region that fell on the head of Shiva, rendering him pure in the process, then purified the earth and branched out into seven tributaries. The one that followed Bhagiratha and rid his ancestors of their sins is commonly known as the Ganga River. Therefore, Svami Desikan most appropriately uses the term "trividha gatyanukUlatarA" to describe the Ganga River in this verse. This tribute highlights the similarity as well as the difference between Daya Devi and the Ganga River. The Ganga River rids everyone who bathes in her of their sins. So too does Daya Devi. The Ganga River also absolved the sons of king Sagara of their sins and enabled them to gain Svarga loka. Prostrating to Daya Devi also grants the boon of Svarga lokam."

Both Daya Devi and the Ganga River have the contact with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. One may wonder, where is the river in the hills of Venkatam? Where is the water flow? How does the contact with the Feet of Lord Srinivasa come about? The answer to these questions come about from Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi pasuram 3.3.8 "kunRam Enti kuLir mazhai kAttavan anRu j~nAlam aLanta pirAn paran cenRu cEr tiruvEnkaTa mAmalai onRumE tozha nam vinai OyumE". The tribute "kunRam Enti kuLir mazhai kAttavan" is a reference to Lord Krishna who protected the residents of Gokulaam from the fury of Indra by holding



vR^iShagiri nAtha pAda parirambhavatI bhavatI

aloft the Govardhana Mountain. The salutation "aRru j~nAlam aLanda pirAn" refers to the Trivikrama avataram, where Lord Narayana measured the entire earth with one giant stride. Next, the eulogy "paran cenRru cEr tiruvEnkaTa mAmalai" denotes the fact that this supreme Lord has taken residence in the Venkatam hill. The connection to Lord Srinivasa is highlighted by Svami Desikan in the tribute "vR^iShagiri nAtha pAda parirambhavatI bhavatI" of this verse, closely following the Azhvar's footsteps. The implication here is that all those who prostrate at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa are blessed with the torrential flow of Daya Devi's compassion. Because of this characteristic, Daya Devi forever has the association with Lord Srinivasa's Feet. This also makes the important point that Ganga had the contact with the Lotus feet of the Lord during His avatarams as Trivikrama, Rama, and Krishna, whereas Daya Devi has permanent contact with the Feet of Lord Srinivasa, thereby depicting a salient difference between Daya Devi and the Ganga River. In the DevanAyaka PancAshat, Svami Desikan highlights the superiority of the Garuda nadi compared to the Ganga river and in the PAdukA Sahasram declares the superiority of the Kaveri river over the Ganga. The Azhvar prabandham too suggests the superiority of the Kaveri river over the Ganga river. All of this is due to the constant contact that the Garuda nadi and Kaveri enjoy with the Lord's feet. One may ask "Lord Ranganatha is reclining on His serpent bed. This being the case, how is there constant contact with the Lord's feet for the Kaveri river?" The contact comes about due to the fact that the Kaveri waters are used for nitya tirumanjanam for Lord Ranganatha. In the verse 43 of DevanAyaka PancAshat, "pankAnyasau mama nihanti mahasthara~NgaiH ga~NgAdhikAM vidadhatI garuDasravantIm nAkaukasAM maNikirITaganaIrupAsyA nAtha tvadIya padayor nakha ratna pa~NktiH" (Oh Lord Devanatha! The nails on Your toes are like gems in a formation. The radiance from these gems is all pervasive. These feet are respectfully saluted by Devas, with their heads adorned by crowns. They are in fact performing upasana of the radiance emanating from these gems. The Garuda nadi, which is in constant contact with Your feet and is therefore superior to the Ganga river, offers a torrential flow of water, which alone can cleanse my sins, which are in the form of slush.) Thus, the superiority of the Garuda nadi comes about due to constant contact with the feet of Lord Devanayaka. It may then be asked, what is the use for others if Daya Devi enjoys constant contact with the feet of Lord Srinivasa? Svami Desikan answers this in the tribute "parirambhavatI bhavatI sura sindhuri vAtanute sakR^idavagAhamAnamapatApamapApamapi" to denote the fact that just as one who unknowingly takes a dip in the Ganga river is rid of his sins and gains relief from the scorching heat, You too, Oh Daya Devi! offer relief to beings who prostrate



Oh Daya Devi! You offer relief to beings who prostrate once at the feet of Lord Srinivasa

once at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. The glory of Ganga is comprehensively described in the grantham known as Ganga Mahatmiyam. Srimad Ramayanam devotes six to seven sargams known as Ganga avataraNam to eulogize the Ganga River. Specifically, while dwelling on the role of Bhagiratha in bringing the Ganga to the earth, there is a phala sruti verse which states that those who listen to the sargams describing the avataram of Ganga are become recipients of the blessings of their ancestors. Not only that, but their entire load of sins are also destroyed. The greatness of the Ganga River comes about due to its origin at the foot of Trivikrama. Therefore, it has the power to rid one of their sins and offer relief from the scorching heat to even those who unknowingly perform snAnam in the river. "ga~Nge ga~Ngeti yo brUyAt yojanAnAM shataIrapi" elucidates the fact that one who utters the words Ganga Ganga from even a distance of a hundred yojanas, is graced with the benefit of Ganga snanam. This applies for those in distant lands as well. If they utter the word Ganga while performing snanam, they will be blessed with the same benefit as those who actually undertake Ganga snanam. Now Daya Devi performs a task which is glorified in terms of the benefit afforded by the Ganga River. It must be remembered that avagAha snAnam (deep immersion) in the Ganga River, performed knowingly or unknowingly of the greatness of the river, rids one of their sins and heat related afflictions (tApams). Likewise, Daya Devi too rids Her supplicants of their sins and tApams, when they prostrate before Her even once, regardless of whether they are aware or not of Her loftiness. The question of whether one needs to perform nitya Ganga snanam to rid oneself of sins arises. Svami Desikan answers this through the usage of "sakR^idavagAhamAnam". Namely performing the Ganga snanam once is sufficient. One need not do this repeatedly. Similarly, when one performs the act of surrender to Daya Devi once, they are rid of all their sins and tApams. The usage of sakR^it in the context of Daya Devi denotes the performance of SaraNAgati. We may have wasted our time so far and not recognized the precious life that has been afforded to us due to the grace of Daya Devi. In keeping with the ShANDilya smR^iti salutation "vR^itaiva bhavato yAthA bhUyasi janma santatiH" Lord Narayana grants one their current birth with the hope that the individual resorts to the Lord either through Bhakti yogam or Prapatti with the sole objective of blessing them with eternal Kaimkaryam. However, due to numerous such wasted opportunities, one is caught up in the seemingly interminable cycle of birth and death in keeping with the statement "punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam". Having this knowledge at least from now on engage in the act of SharaNAgati to Lord Narayana, which will ensure relief from the cycle of births and deaths declares the ShANDilya smR^iti. Therefore, do not

waste any more time is the instruction from this salutation. In keeping with the statements "sakR^idevahi shAstrArthaH kR^itAyam…", "prAyaH prapadhane pumsAm paunAH puNyam nivAraNam" it is sufficient to perform the SharaNAgati once. Lord Ranganatha reclining on the serpent bed in Srirangam, has His hand in a slightly raised posture pointing to His feet. The instruction here is that perform surrender to Him only once and He will take care of the rest. In the context of the Daya Satakam tribute, it is sufficient to perform the Ganga snanam once. One need not have any special qualifications or knowledge of the loftiness of the Ganga. Even a cow that is oblivious to the loftiness of the Ganga that takes a dip in the sacred waters is relieved of its tApam and pApam. So too if one seeks refuge in the torrential flow of Daya Devi's compassion, one is immediately cleansed of one's sins committed in the past and gains instant relief from samsaric heat. Not only that Daya Devi ensures that all sins that may be committed by the individual in future after performing SharaNAgati are also washed off. Again, as in the case of the Ganga River seeking refuge in Daya Devi need not be undertaken with knowledge of Her loftiness. This is reflected in the salutation "avidita vaibhavApi" of this verse. Svami Kuresa declares in the verse 61 of AtimAnuSha stavam "pApIyaso(a)pi sharaNAgati shabdabhAjo nopekShaNaM mama tavocitamIshvarasya tvatjj~nAna shakti karuNAsu satIShu naIva pApaM parAkramitumarhati mAmakInAm" (Although I have sinned greatly, since I have performed sharaNAgati to You, I cannot be punished. I am not sure even the words uttered by way of performing sharaNAgati, were done knowingly or unknowingly. Only Your Daya has ensured that the words I uttered but once while performing SharaNAgati, remained true to their purport and were rendered meaningful). Thus, seeking refuge in Daya Devi in a singular instance by way of SharaNAgati confers paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam in keeping with the tribute "sakR^idavagAhamAnamapatApamapApamapi" of this verse. It is important to note here that merely because one has sought refuge in Daya Devi, this is not a license to willfully engage in sinful actions."

We then quote the aanubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Your flow bears a resemblance to the holy Ganga flow. Both bear the burden of protection of all worlds. You afford the three-fold boons of (aisvarya, kaivalya, and moksha) to the seeker, whom You favor. Ganga is reputed as of three-fold flow (in the upper, earthly and nether regions). Both of you can be credited with association with the feet of the Lord Srinivasa. What is more, both perhaps do not know the potency of boon granting? Anyone who takes a dip, a single dip at that in Your flood or in the Ganga-flood (even when the person is


sakR^idavagAhamAnamapatApamapApamapi

unaware of the infinite efficacy of the dip-ritual) is relieved of his sultriness - he realizes it palpably and of his sinfulness - he may not know it! So what?) What a great favor both of You confer on a human!

1. A dip in the Daya flow is a figurative usage. One can ask, how to have a dip in an abstract concept, namely Daya quality? Daya comes as a flood of cool water to anyone who invokes it by way of performing Prapatti. There are numerous pramaNAs pointing to this fact. Only by SharaNAgati can one secure the Daya flow. Every other act or ritual can only be a step not the final achievement!

2. The detailed commentary implies that this slokam may point to the Yamuna river notwithstanding the Sanskrit diction "sura sindhu", referring to the Ganga River. According to the celebrated author, Yamuna had a prolonged contact with the feet of Lord Narayana in His Avataram as KrishNa on the basis of the Goda Stuti tribute "kR^iShNanvayena dadhatiM yamunAnubhavam". In fact, orthodox scholars may aver that Ganga has a tinge of association with Siva's matted hair. Therefore, the Azhvars pronounced the Kaveri to be superior to the Ganga. Again, this commentary needs to be understood in the spirit of nahi-ninda nyAyam, whereby to illustrate the greatness of a certain object or entity, a comparison with someone of similar stature is undertaken and it is established that the former tops the latter. This is by no means an attempt to belittle the latter. In this instance it must be understood that this is not an exercise in belittling the sacred Ganga River."



Slokam 55

निगम समाश्रिता निखिल लोक समृद्धि करी

भजदघ कूल मुद्रुज गतिः परितप्त हिता ।

प्रकटित हंस मत्स्य कमठाद्यवतार शता

विबुध सरिच्छ्रियं वृषगिरीश दये वहसि ॥ ५५ ॥

nigama samAshritA nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI

bhajadagha kUla mudR^ija gatiH paritapta hitA|

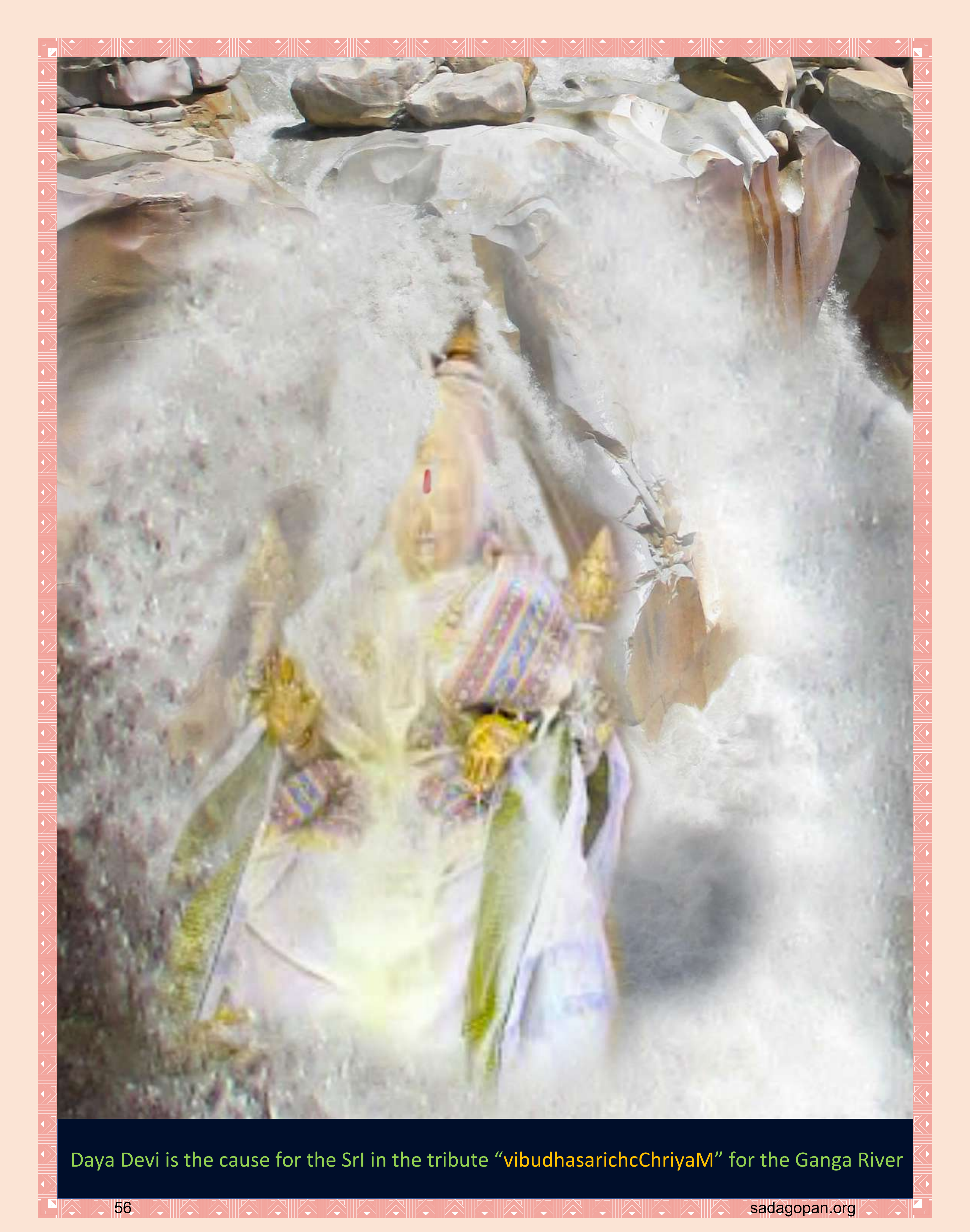
prakaTita haMsa matsya kamaThAdhyavatAra shatA

vibudha sarichcChriyaM vR^iShagirIsha daye vahasi||55



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapetttai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse "nigama samAshritA nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI bhajadagha kUla mudR^ija gatiH paritapta hitA prakaTita haMsa matsya kamaThAdhyavatAra shatA vibudha sarichcChriyaM vR^iShagirIsha daye vahasi" also highlights the commonality between the Ganga River and Daya Devi. The previous slokam was based on upamAna alankAram, whereas this verse is based on nidarshana alankAram. When upamAna alankAram is employed, one object (upamAnam) is compared to another (upameyam). In this comparison, the implicit assumption is that upameyam lends greatness to upamAnam. Therefore, the sura sindhu tribute from the previous verse may convey the impression that the Ganga is greater than Daya Devi. In order to avoid any misconceptions in this regard, Svami Desikan uses the nidarshana alankAram to give the exact perception of the similarity between Daya Devi and the Ganga River. The tribute "vibudha sarichcChriyaM vR^iShagirIsha daye vahasi" conveys the import that Daya Devi is the cause for the SrI in the tribute "vibudhasarichcChriyaM" for the Ganga River. The salutation "nigama samAshritA" denotes the fact that both the Ganga River and Daya Devi are nigama pratipAdya - that is glorified by the Vedas. They both are the refuge of the Vedas too. The Vedam eulogy "imam me ga~Nge yamune sarasvati" points to the fact that the Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati are sought after by the Vedas. Where is the glorification of Daya Devi in the Vedas? The Vedas glorify Lord Narayana, who is forever associated with SrI. Thus, all glorification of Lord Narayana is also a glorification of Thayar.



Daya Devi is the cause for the SrI in the tribute “vibudhasarichcChriyaM” for the Ganga River

Likewise, all glorification of Thayar is a glorification of Lord Narayana. Since the equivalence between Thayar and Daya Devi has been established in a prior verse, all glorification of Lord Narayana and Thayar in the Vedas constitute a tribute to Daya Devi. Lord Narayana begets fame on account of His association with Thayar according to the Vedam tribute "shraddhaya devaH devatvam ashnute". Mahalakshmi Thayar is known as "Shraddha". One associated with Shraddha gained devatvam. In other words, Lord Narayana gains His devatvam (status as a Deva) on account of association with Mahalakshmi Thayar. This is also reflected in Svami NammAzhvar's formal SharaNAgati contained in the Tiruvaimozhi verse 6.10 "akala illen iRayum enRu alarmElmankai uRai mArbA nikaril pukazhAi ulakam mUnRuDayAi ennai ALvAnE nikaril amarar muni kaNankal virumbum TiruvEnkaTattAnE pukazh onRillA aDiyEn un aDikkIzh amarntu pukuntEnE". The salutation "alarmElmankai uRai mArbA" denotes the fact that Thayar is never separated from Lord Narayana even for a moment, and has thus taken up residence in the Lord's vakShasthalam (chest). Due to this eternal association with Thayar, Lord Narayana acquires untold fame.



Thayar is none other than Daya Devi

Thayar is none other than Daya Devi. Therefore, all places in the Vedam that glorify Lord Narayana, implicitly glorify Thayar. Since Daya Devi is no different from

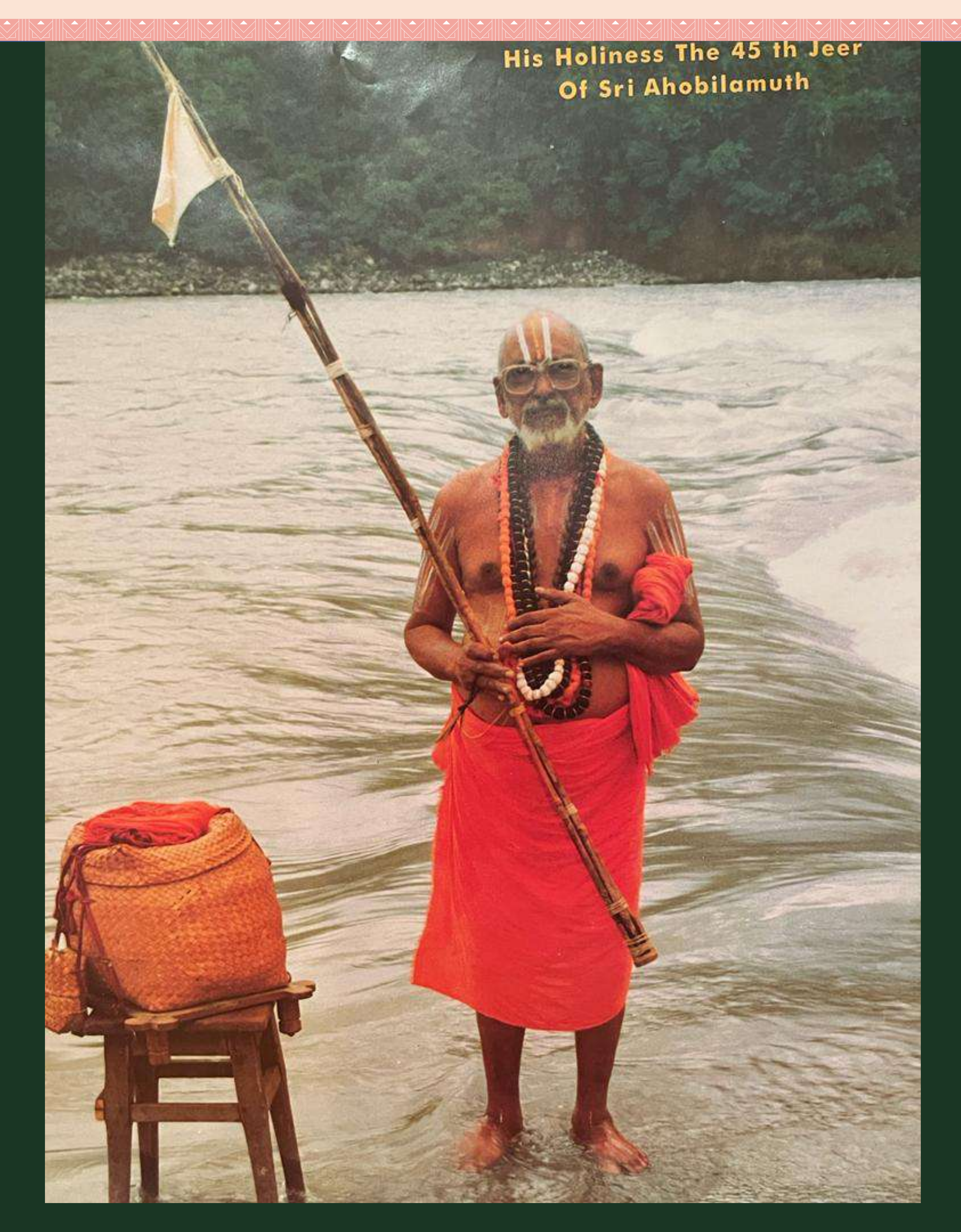
Thayar, it follows that all places in the Vedam that glorify Lord Narayana, also glorify Daya Devi. Since the Vedam has sought refuge in Lord Narayana, it has also sought refuge in Daya Devi. In keeping with the statement "vedAkSharANi yAvanti paTitAni dvijAdibhiH tAvanti harinAmAni kIrtitAni na samShayaH", every word of the Vedam, studied by Brahmins is a glorification of Hari (Lord Narayana). Let there be no doubt about this. Due to this fact, when one examines the result that is obtained by veda adhyayanam, it is the destruction of all sins. Since the Vedam has sought refuge in Daya Devi, there is no doubt that Daya Devi is instrumental for the destruction of all sins. This is the import of the salutation "nigama samAshritA" from this verse.



nigama samAshritA

Next the tribute "nikhila loka samR^iddhikarI" denotes the fact that Daya Devi is the cause for bestowing fulfillment in the entire universe. This is an attribute shared by the Ganga River as well. Due to her flow, the Ganga River renders the land fertile for growth of bountiful crops enabling production of food in plenty, thus assuring "nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI". The Ganga River brings great joy on account of snAna (bathing, which rids one of their sins as well as provides relief from the summer heat due to the inherent coolness of the waters), pAna (drinking the cool waters quenches one's thirst) and darshana (beholding the beautiful sight of the torrential flow). In one instance in the Srimad Bhagavatam, Uddhava narrates the greatness of the Sripada thirtham (water that washes the feet of Bhagavatas). Specifically, those mahans (great ones), who are engaged in constant contemplation of Lord Narayana, render the world sacred by the water used to wash their feet, which destroys all sins. These waters are purer than the waters of all the puNya nadis (Ganga, Yamuna, and others). This is reflected in the statement "aghabhit anghrijalAH" These waters must be partaken with the utterance of the mantram "etat samasta pApAnAm prAyashcittam manIShiNaH prAsanam bhavagavad bhakta pAdodakaM niShevaNam" (These waters serve as the expiatory rites for all sins, when partaken after washing the feet of Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana). Thus, our elders have established that if prayashcittams (expiatory acts) are required for ridding oneself of the effects of sins, one must partake of the water from washing the feet of Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana. Now the Ganga River is the water from the SrIpAda tIrtham from offering to Lord Narayana's feet during the Trivikrama avatAram. While this is no doubt great, even greater is the water that is offered to the feet of Lord Narayana's Bhagavatas. Daya Devi accordingly ensures that Her seekers resort to the waters from the feet of Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana, to rid themselves of sins. Once their sins are destroyed, the fulfillment comes about due to unmitigated flow of Bhagavad anugrahaam. Thus, Daya Devi too ensures "nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI."

Next, the tribute from this Daya Satakam verse "bhajadagha kUla mudR^ija gatiH paritapta hitA" refers to the fact that Ganga provides relief to people who take a dip in her by ridding them of their difficulties. The inner meaning is that those who are suffering intensely from the summer heat or from lack of rain, gain relief from a dip in the Ganga River. Likewise, when suffering jivans encounter troubles due to the tApam arising from their sins, they seek refuge in Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi unfailingly comes to their rescue and rids them of their suffering. This is the nidarshana alankAram inherent to this verse. Another point to be noted in this context is "bhajadagha kUla mudR^ija gatiH". This denotes the fact that the Ganga



Sripada tirtham - Daya Devi ensures that Her seekers resort to the waters that washes the feet of Parama Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana, to destroy the seekers' manifold sins.

(HH 45th pattam Srimad Azhagiasingar on the shores of Ganga River)



shraddhaya devaH devatvam ashnute

River overcomes all obstacles that come in the way of her flow and reaches those who seek refuge in her. For example, if a dam is constructed, the waters of the Ganga remain constrained and cannot serve the purpose of ridding all her seekers of their sins and sultriness. Instead, the force of the Ganga River overcomes all obstructions and physical barriers that come in her way and continues her flow to grace her seekers. In the case of the Ganga River, obstructions to her flow are visible in full view. On the other hand, when it comes to Daya Devi, these obstructions remain hidden from view. The obstructions are sins committed by Her seekers. These sins accumulate in the form of a mountainous pile. For example, if one has dental problems, there is a build-up of plaque, which accumulates gradually, and eventually becomes a cavity that is difficult to treat. The sin pile too, likewise, accumulates over a significant period to time and becomes a mountainous rendition, which becomes extremely difficult to purge. The torrential flow of Daya Devi, much like the flow of the Ganga River, effortlessly destroys these sins and ensures that Her seekers become fitting receptacles for the grace of Lord Narayana. This is again the nidarshana alankAram highlighted in this verse.

Next, the tribute "prakaTita haMsa matsya kamaThAdhyavatAra shatA" from this verse is examined. The Ganga River offers a fertile environment for swans, tortoises, fishes, and other water animals to flourish. The implication is that these water animals enhance the beauty of the flowing water of the Ganga. The Daya Devi flow is fertile ground for Lord Narayana to incarnate as Hamsa (Swan), Matsya (Fish), and KamaTa (KUrma - the tortoise). This lends great beauty to the Daya Devi flow. The three avatarams are mentioned by way of maintaining the common perspective between Daya Devi and the Ganga River. However, Svami Desikan continues that in addition to these three avatarams, Daya Devi's torrential flow is the cause of numerous other incarnations by Lord Narayana that facilitates BhagavAn's anugraham for Her seekers. This slokam completes the analogy between Daya Devi and the Ganga River. This verse also allows for the interpretation of the equivalence between Daya Devi and the Yamuna River. Normally, when sacred rivers are invoked, it is common to mention Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati. DevaprayAg is the place where the three rivers meet. This is known as TriveNi sangamam. Accordingly, the previous two verses discussed the commonality between Daya Devi and the Sarasvati and Ganga Rivers. Svami Desikan completes the analogy by allowing for the interpretation of this verse in terms of a similarity between Daya Devi and the Yamuna River. The salutation "nigama samAshritA" lends itself to the interpretation that the three rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati are saluted by the Vedam due to the tribute "imam me



The torrential flow of Daya Devi, effortlessly destroys the sins of Her devotees

ga~Nge yamune sarasvati". Accordingly, the salutation "nigama samAshritA" in this instance is appropriate for the Yamuna River. As discussed previously, the tribute is also applicable to Daya Devi. Therefore, this verse can be exposited upon as a similarity between the Yamuna River and Daya Devi. The tribute "nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI" also becomes applicable to the Yamuna River. It may be borne in mind, that the Ganga River has the association with the feet of Trivikrama. However, the Yamuna River enjoyed contact with the entire body of Lord Narayana during the Krishna avataram due to the numerous occasions that Lord Krishna performed snanam in the river. Sri Andal celebrates this aspect in Her TiruppAvai tribute "tUya perunIr yamunai turaivanE". Thus, it is established that the Yamuna River too rids one of their sins when people perform snAnam. Moreover, the cool waters of the Yamuna River offer welcome relief from the sweltering heat of the summer. The tribute "bhajadagha kUla mudR^ija gatiH" also applies to the Yamuna River due to the fact that She overcomes all obstacles to Her flow and graces those who seek Her. Sri Kuresa laments that he did not gain residence near the Yamuna River "asikathAsi janma" (How I wish to become a grain of sand on the banks of the Yamuna River, which was sanctified due to contact with Lord Krishna!). Since the Yamuna River waters also offer relief from sufferings (tApam and pApam) for Her seekers, the salutation "paritapta hitA" becomes appropriate in this instance. The Yamuna River waters also offer a conducive environment for Swans, Fish, Tortoises and other water animals. Therefore, the glorification "prakaTita haMsa matsya kamaThAdhyavatAra shatA" is fitting for the Yamuna River. This river is also "vibudha sarit" since it is the object of glorification by the Devas. "mathura nAma puNya nagari" is the tribute used to describe the city of Mathura, that lies on the banks of the Deva nadi, Yamuna. This was the place, where the Devas undertook penance to secure the grace of Lord Narayana during the time of his avatAram as VAmana. Thus, the import of this verse and the two prior verses is to illustrate the fact that the upakAram (help) rendered by the torrential flow of Daya Devi is far in excess of the upakAram rendered by the puNya nadis, Ganga, Yamuna, and Sarasvati. Therefore, the kataksham of Daya Devi is most sought after. Her munificent grace is such that just as one uttering "Ganga Ganga" from a distance "yojanAnAm shataIrapi" is graced with the benefit of performing actual Ganga snanam, so too does the grace of Daya Devi come about for one who even from a distance seeks the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharia Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Your flow and the Ganga flow are very much similar. In particular:



nikhila loka samR^iddhi karI

1. Both are praised in the Vedas and Upanishads. Prapatti too has been specifically extolled in the scriptures; it employs Vedic mantras. It has been acclaimed as the one act that will infallibly invoke the torrential Daya flow.

2. Both confer on all worlds, all beings too, every kind of well-being and auspiciousness. Bhakti Yogam is special in terms of its requirements and is suitable only for a few capable ones. On the other hand, Prapatti is commonly resorted to by all. The latter is particularly applicable for the indigent ones, the lowliest, the physically and/or mentally handicapped, towards whom Lord Srinivasa's Daya flow is spontaneous and torrential. The land produces rich crops because of Ganga's water flow. Moksha and three other purushArthas result from the Daya flow.

3. To those who resort to either, the banks, bunds, the dams, the barriers are destroyed and swept aside by the flood. The physical phenomenon pertaining to this occurrence is obvious to the reader in the case of the Ganga River. However, the Daya flow invoked by a Prapanna shatters the banks of puNya and pApa. Therefore, both floods (Daya Devi and Ganga) level unequal and undulating surfaces. The figurative usage by Kavi-Tarkika-Simham is most appropriate!

4. Both are conducive to and confer comfort on the people receiving the flow. In the case of the Ganga flow, the elimination of heat, sultriness and discomfort comes about. With regard to the Daya flow, the travails of earthly life are removed. The Prapanna enjoys the wealth and well-being and attains eternal bliss.

5. Both proclaim and publicize the case of beings such as the swan, fish, and tortoise in addition to a number of water animals, indeed numbering the hundreds. In the case of the Ganga, the existence of these species is implied. In the case of Daya Devi, the reference is to hundreds of avataras, including those of the fish, swan, and tortoise. Oh Daya Devi! In this manner, the Ganga and Yourself bear a certain resemblance."



Slokam 56

जगति मितम्पचा त्वदितरा तु दये तरळा

फल नियमोज्झिता भवति सन्तपनाय पुनः ।

त्वमिह निरङ्कुश प्रशकनादि विभूतिमती

वितरसि देहिनां निरवधिं वृषशैल निधिम् ॥ ५६ ॥

jagati mitampachA tvaditarA tu daye! taralA

phala niyamojjhitA bhavati santapanAya punaH|

tvamiha nira~Ngusha prashakanAdi vibhutimatI

vitarasi dehinAM niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim||56



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The previous two verses highlighted the similarity between the Ganga river and Daya Devi. Next the question arises what about other rivers? Can there be a such a similarity? It must be noted that the Ganga is superior to many other rivers in that it is a jIva nadi, that always has flowing water. However, the same cannot be said of other rain fed rivers. They may contain water at times and at other times they may run dry. Thus, it becomes very difficult to plan sowing the seeds for growth of crops in anticipation of sufficient rainfall to fill such rivers. However, no such concerns arise with respect to the Ganga river. In this verse, Svami Desikan undertakes a comparison of Srinivasa Daya flow with the Daya of other Devatas and human beings. The word Daya itself is a sa-sambandhika shabdam, namely a word that always comes with association. For example, the term "todarvu" (continuation) in Tamil gives rise to the question with whom and with what? Similarly, the term "kaTAkSham" in Sanskrit gives rise to the question whose kaTAkSham? Similarly, the term "prakAsham" (radiance) can pertain either to the Sun or another light source. Therefore, some terms inevitably come with a specific association. Without the association, the meaning of the term remains incomplete. Similarly, the term Daya gives rise to the question whose Daya? So far Svami Desikan has employed the usage of vR^iShagirinAtha daye tvam, vR^iShagiri daye, anjana girinAtharanjani to refer to the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. Likewise, the quality of Daya can be present in other Devatas, kings, and masters. This verse undertakes

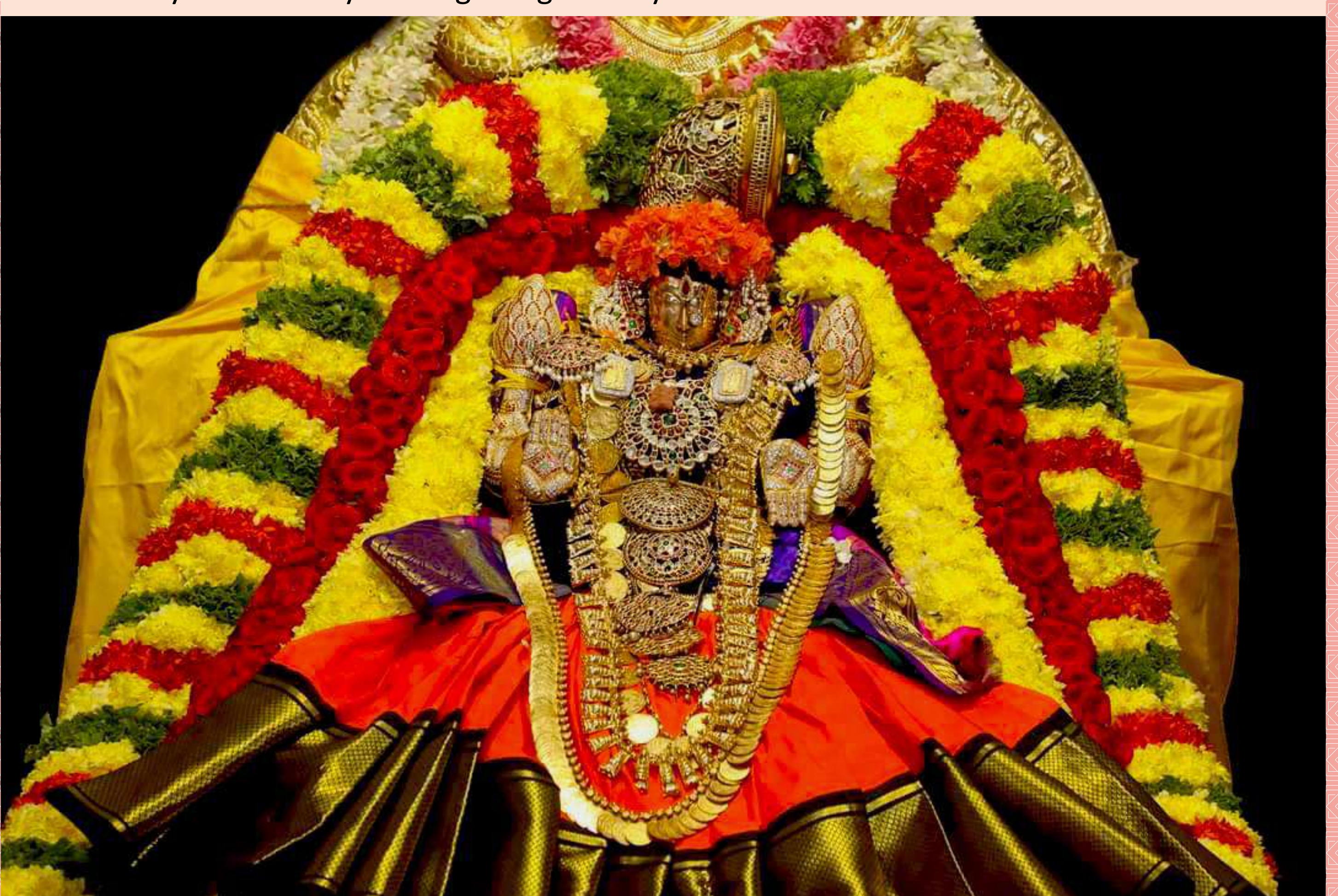
a comparison of Srinivasa Daya with the Daya of others mentioned here. Specifically, Svami Desikan elucidates the benefits obtained from Srinivasa Daya and compares it to the benefits arising from the Daya of others.



SrInivAsa Daya!

This verse is "jagati mitampachA tvaditarA tu daye! taralA phala niyamojjhitA bhavati santapanAya punaH tvamiha nira~Ngusha prashakanAdi vibhutimatI vitarasi dehinAM niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim." The tribute "jagati mitampachA tvaditarA tu daye! taralA" refers to the fact that Daya of others besides Srinivasa Daya is only capable of granting trivial benefits. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the benefits granted by the Daya of others are lasting. Furthermore, there are no guarantees that the Daya of others will grant the desired benefits. Will the granting of these benefits offer lasting satisfaction? Even here there are no guarantees. Will additional troubles accrue upon receiving these benefits? Quite possible is the answer from Svami Desikan. Therefore, Svami Desikan emphasizes the point that the benefits accorded by the Daya of other Devatas is parimitam (transient) and alpam (trivial). It is helpful to remember the slokam "Arogyam bhAskarAt icChet aishvaryammicChet hutAsanAt", which declares that good health can be gained by the worship of Surya, while wealth can

be gained from the worship of Agni. Similarly, Ishvara (Siva) is capable of only granting knowledge, while Lord Narayana grants moksham. Thus, each of these Devatas - Surya, Agni, and Siva are capable of granting only a specific benefit in keeping with the declaration "ekaIkaphalam". However, Lord Srinivasa is capable of granting all benefits as documented in the declaration "sarvaphalam". This is readily obtained by seeking refuge in Daya Devi.



Sarvaphalam prApya

The tribute "mitampachA" from this verse attests to the fact that the benefits gained from the Daya of other deities are trivial in nature. Again, the term trivial (alpam) is relative in that it begets the question compared to what is the trivial benefit? For example, one can draw a line and draw a longer line besides this and a third that is even longer than the other two. Thus, the length of one line being greater than that of the other is relative and affords a comparison. In this context, the benefits too afforded by the Daya of other devatas is described as "mitampachA" to denote the fact that these benefits are of a limited nature compared to the benefits arising from Srinivasa Daya. For example, if one

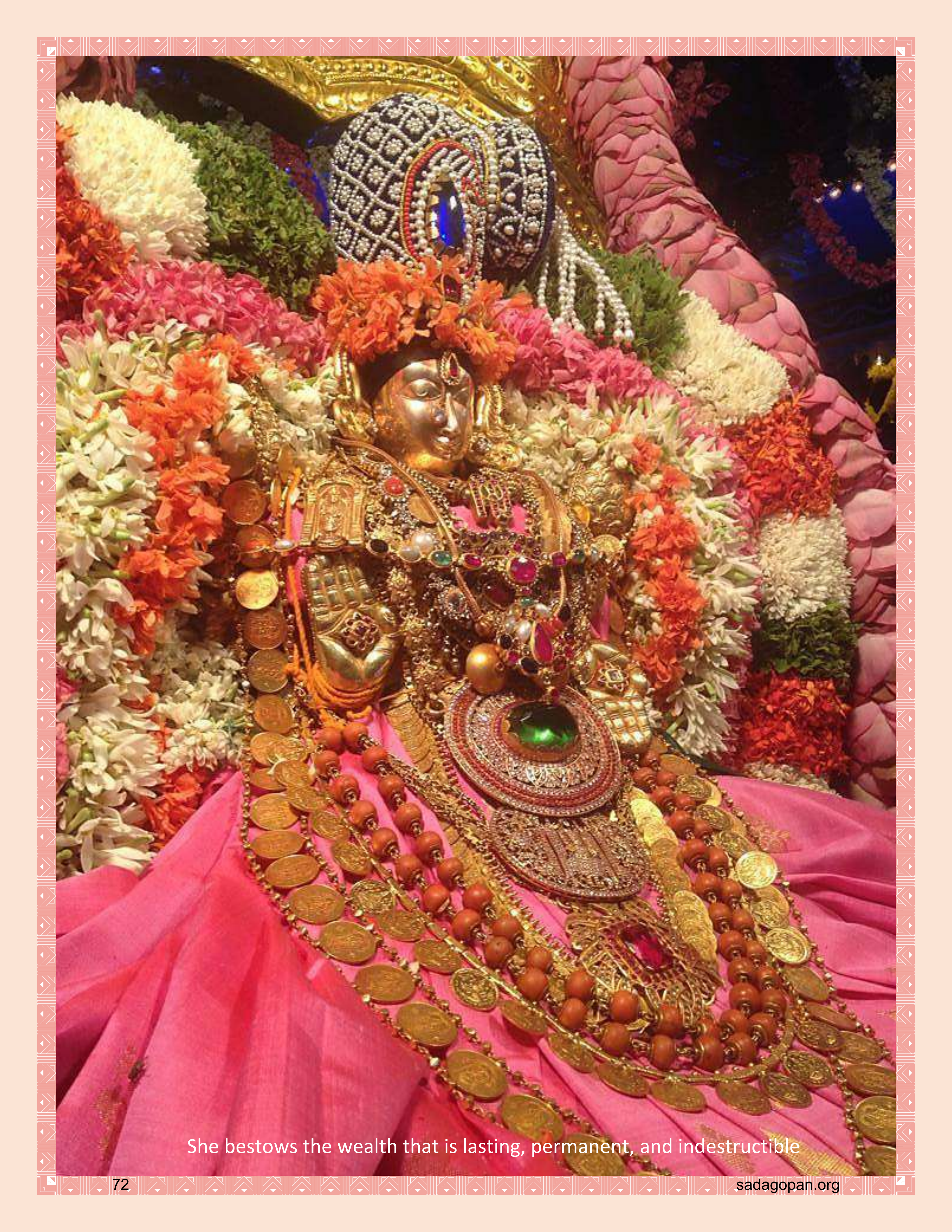
approaches the village chief seeking a reward for some action, it will always be less than that conferred by the king of a vast kingdom. Likewise, the benefits afforded by the Daya of other deities is limited and transient in comparison to the benefits gained from Daya Devi, associated with Lord Srinivasa.



Seek refuge at Her Sacred Feet and receive unlimited benefits

Next the usage "taraLA" from this verse denotes the state of one who accrues this benefit. Is it lasting or permanent? Does it give rise to additional difficulties? These are answered next. In this context it is helpful to note that the mind is most fickle (cancalam). Wealth is even more so. It may come one moment and disappear the next. "In keeping with the declaration "kShaNashaH kaNashashcaiva vidyAM arthaM ca sAdhayet kShaNe naShTe kuto vidyA kaNe naShTe kuto dhanaM" meaning every moment including its last fractional part should be treated as being precious. For example, while undertaking the task of gaining knowledge, one must engage in the task with undiluted focus without even wasting a fraction of a moment. If lethargy sets in one day and one fails to

perform the regular study under the excuse that it shall be undertaken the next day, that moment may never arrive. That is, additional constraints can arise the next day precluding study, and the build-up of such days can easily accumulate. In a like manner, accumulation of wealth must take place with utmost diligence and without compromising on even a single penny. Therefore, it becomes "taraLA" as described in this Daya Satakam verse. Svami NammAzhvar declares in the Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram "Oru nAyakamAi ODa ulakuDan ANDavar karu nAi kavarnta kAlar citaikiya pAnaiyar peru nADu kANa immayile picchai tAm koLvar tirunAraNan tAl kAlampera cintituimminO" that one may be the emperor of a large kingdom for a day. However, the wealth, stature, and paraphernalia that comes with this disappears in an instant leading the king to beg for alms to support his family. However, he is embarrassed to seek alms adorning himself with the robes and ornaments of a king. Therefore, he covers his face with a black cloth. After collecting his alms for the day, the king returns at night and is unable to see a black dog that is lying in his way and inadvertently steps on the dog. This causes the dog to bark loudly and bite the king's foot, which results in his collection bowl (made of mud) to fall on the ground and shatter, thereby losing all his alms for the day. Hearing the sound, a lot of people gather and discover it is the king who is experiencing this plight. Therefore, even the untold wealth of a king lasts only for a while. It is limited and transient. This is due to the fact that the kingdom resulted from the grace of another devata besides Lord Narayana. Therefore, the usage "taraLA" denotes the fleeting nature of the benefits accorded by devatantaras. Sri Venkatadhvari Kavi, who composed the Lakshmi Sahasram consisting of a thousand verses in the same manner as Svami Desikan's Paduka Sahasram, discusses the kaTAkSham of PadmAvati Thayar in the verse "kanaka shibikArUDhAH proUDhAdhirAjya pade sthitAH katicidatulaM manyA dhanyAshcaranti yadIndire yadapi ca vahantyenAM dInaH pare phalamamba tat dvayamapi tava stokAlokAn vayavyatirekayoH" Specifically, he alludes to the benefit of receiving Thayar's kaTAkSham and then addresses what happens when one does not beget Thayar's kaTAkSham. One who is the beneficiary of Thayar's kaTAkSham is riding a golden palanquin. They are ruling the world. Due to receiving the grace of Thayar, they are rendered "dhanya" or the blessed ones. One who has not received the kaTAkSham of Thayar carries the golden palanquin, that is occupied by the one graced with the KaTAkSham of Thayar, with great difficulty. This is referring to material wealth that can come one day and disappear the next. However, the wealth that is lasting, permanent, and indestructible comes about on account of the grace of Daya Devi, who has an eternal association with Lord Srinivasa.



She bestows the wealth that is lasting, permanent, and indestructible

Thus, in accordance with the tribute "phala niyamojjhitA" of this Daya Satakam verse, there is no guarantee of gaining the desired boon from worship of Devatantaras. "yajeta svarga kAmaH" is the prescription for gaining Svarga loka, namely in order to gain residence in Svarga lokam, one needs to perform yaj~nas. Accordingly, they undertake the performance of yAgam. However, there is no proof of one having performed yaj~nas in their lifetime and attaining Svarga loka vAsam that has returned to the earth and narrated the finiteness of the experience. How do we then ascertain whether they indeed gained residence in Svarga lokam? One may not end up reaching Svarga lokam if there are lapses in the performance of the yAgam. This is particularly true for rituals undertaken with the objective of kAmya phalam. If there are lapses in the performance of the ritual, the desired result will not be obtained. Therefore, there is no guarantee of obtaining the desired benefit, when one performs rituals to please other devatas. This is reflected in the "phala niyamojjhitA" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse.

Next the eulogy "bhavati santapanAya punaH" is examined. The prose order (anvaya kramam) for this tribute is "punaH santapanAya bhavati". This expounds upon the fact that even if benefits accrue from the worship of other devatas, they are invariably accompanied by troubles. What are the troubles that can arise? Most people desire Arogyam (good health), aishcaryam (wealth) and Ayush (long life). This itself can give rise to difficulties. How so? One blessed with good health may not put it to proper use in kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana, and instead engage in committing forbidden acts thereby accruing great sin. This only results in additional detrimental consequences. Next comes aishvaryam. It is declared "aishvaryam shatrushAlitA" attesting to the fact that one will have no associates until one gains wealth. However, the associates that one begets upon gaining wealth are of the mindset to profit from the wealth of the individual and come up with a series of demands. In the event the wealthy person turns down these demands, it only results in incurring the enmity of the disappointed associates. Thus, increase in wealth begets increased enmity. Next comes Ayush - long life. If one is blessed with long life but one's near and dear ones are not so fortunate, the long lived one has to grieve over the deaths of their near and dear ones. Thus, even Ayush results in more trouble as evidenced by the tribute "punaH santapanAya bhavati" of this verse. This documents the troubles that can arise when one gains benefits from worship of other devatas. This gives rise to another question "Are other devatas powerless to grant anything? Is Lord Narayana alone the all-powerful boon granter?" This is answered through the pramANa vAkyam (valid source of knowledge) "yo me yathA kalpitavAn bhAgam asmin mahAkratau sa tathA

yaj~nabhAgArho vedasUtre mayA kR^itaH." The devatas conducted a yAgam and glorified Lord Narayana. They specifically requested Lord Narayana, that they too should be blessed with the power to grant boons to their seekers. In response Lord Narayana blessed them to be empowered with ability to grant boons commensurate with their offerings of havis in the yaj~nam. Thus, the devatas' ability to grant boons to their seekers came about as a result of the anugraham of Lord Narayana. They too are endowed with compassion. The benefits arising as a consequence of invoking their compassion have been discussed in detail. Now the attention turns to the Daya of Lord Srinivasa, namely Daya Devi. This is captured in the tribute "tvamiha nira~Ngusha prashakanAdi vibhutimatI" of this verse glorifying the fact that the Daya flow is so powerful that it is unstoppable by any force.



dehinAM niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim

What does Daya Devi confer? The answer lies in the glorification "dehinAM niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim" of this verse. The import of this salutation is that Daya Devi confers upon Her seekers, the matchless Lord, Srinivasa. He is beyond compare - words are insufficient to describe Him and the mind cannot fully comprehend His glory. Lord Srinivasa of such magnificence is delivered by Daya Devi to Her seekers. The eulogy "nira~Ngusha prashakanAdi" declares that even if someone tries to stop Daya Devi in Her act of delivering Lord Srinivasa, She does not desist and simply ignores the attempt. This is illustrated in the Vibhishana saranagati of the RAmAyanam. Lord Rama is on the banks of the ocean. Vibhishana is in the sky as captured in the Ramayanam tribute "antarikSha gati shrImAn". Vibhishana implores to the Vanara army to convey his appeal of "sarvaloka sharaNyAya rAghavAya mahAtmane nivedayata mAm kShipram vibhIShaNam upasthitam" to Lord Rama. There ensues a discussion between Lord Rama and the Vanaras as to whether the appeal of VibhishaNa was sincere and whether he is trustworthy since he belongs to the adversary camp. Lord Rama concluded the debate with his declaration "na datta asya abhayam purA" to emphasize that whatever may be the individual opinions of the Vanaras, he had already made up his mind to accept Vibhishana, while the latter was airborne and made his appeal. Lord Rama further states that He had assured Vibhishana his protection (abhayam) immediately upon arrival. Accordingly, Lord Rama instructs the Vanaras to bring Vibhishana in His presence through the statement "Ananya enam hari shreShTa". Thus, in spite of objections all round from the Vanara army (Sugriva et al), Daya Devi was instrumental in securing Lord Rama's grace for Vibhishana. Another instance from the Ramayanam where this ability of Daya Devi to overrule objections becomes evident can be seen from Lord Rama's promise to the Maharishis in the Dandaka forest. The Maharishis submitted their appeal to Lord Rama that they were being harassed by rakshasas, who caused them untold suffering that came in the way of performing their austerities and that they needed Lord Rama's help to rid them of this menace. In reply, Lord Rama promised that He would exterminate the entire rakshasa clan. Sita Devi enquires of the Lord "Svami! Only a handful of rakshasas are troubling the Maharishis. Furthermore, they have caused us no harm. That being the case, why the promise to exterminate the entire rakshasa clan?" Lord Rama answers this through the statement "apyahaM jIvitaM jahyAM tvAM vA sIte sa lakShmaNAM na tu pratij~nAM saMshrutya brAhmaNeShu visheShataH" (I am prepared to give up My life, forsake You that is dearer to Me than My life and give up Lakshmana who is dearer to Me than You but I will not abandon the Brahmanas that have sought refuge in Me at any cost.)



I will not abandon those that have sought refuge in Me

Not only does Lord Rama make a declarative statement, He demonstrates through His actions by annihilating the fourteen thousand rakshasas that He upholds His promise to the Maharishis. This is again the magic of Daya Devi at work as described in the salutation "tvamiha nira~Ngusha prashakanAdi vibhutimatI" of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, Daya Devi, who is immensely powerful and possesses complete independence engages in the act of "dehinAm" to denote the fact that She makes no distinction of wealthy, poor, educated, illiterate, weak, strong, male, female, sentient or insentient being while dispensing Her grace. The tribute "niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim." describes the fact that Daya Devi confers upon Her seeker, the matchless Lord Srinivasa, who is infinite and beyond description. Also, the comparison between the Daya of Srinivasa and the Daya of other devatas is illustrated. The benefits arising from the latter is characterized by "mitampachA" namely, trivial, limited, and transient. The former delivers Lord Srinivasa, who is "amitampachA", lasting, permanent, and immeasurable. The tribute "taraLA" is employed to describe the transient benefit arising from the daya of other devatas, while the benefit of Brahma anubhavam of Lord Srinivasa is lasting, permanent, and blissful. The other question that arises is whether there can be any obstacles that come in the way of one proceeding to enjoy Brahma anubhavam in Sri Vaikuntam upon gaining moksham. Only two possibilities arise in this context. Either the one privileged to gain moksham refuses this or Lord Narayana stops the entry to Sri Vaikuntam. Upon gaining entry to Sri Vaikuntam, neither does Lord Narayana want to let go of the jivan nor does the jivan desire a return to earthly existence. Hence, the question of "punarAvartanam" becomes a moot point. Thus, there is no obstacle that comes in the way of the mukta jivan to enjoy Lord Narayana. This establishes the fact that the wealth conferred by Daya Devi is indestructible (sthiram). The benefits granted by the Daya of other devatas is "phala niyamojjhitA"- no guarantees of gaining the desired benefits. However, with respect to Srinivasa Daya, there is no doubt about gaining the desired fruit of paripurna Brahma anubhavam. The inner meaning is that when one performs saranagati to Lord Srinivasa, the paripurna Brahma anubhavam is guaranteed. One need not have any doubt in this regard. The tribute "bhavati santapanAya punaH" from this verse reflects the fact that benefits arising from the Daya of other devatas are accompanied by troubles and dangers. Whereas no such troubles arise from the benefits accruing on account of Srinivasa Daya. The lasting wealth of Brahma anubhavam conferred by Daya Devi only gives rise to unlimited bliss. For example, if one suddenly discovers a hidden wealth in his premises, the first question that arises is whether he can keep it or should he turn it over to the authorities. Next,

in the event of deciding to keep it, the individual needs to find a safe place. He cannot openly take this out to a jewelry store for fear of being turned over to the authorities. Thus, this individual, who was leading a peaceful life until the arrival of the windfall, has now lost sleep, is plagued by worry, and is fearful of others trying to steal his wealth. This is the state of one who gains benefits on account of the Daya of other devatas.



Sri Daya Devi confers Eternal Bliss!

However, the wealth conferred by Daya Devi results in unlimited, eternal bliss, free of any troubles, fears, or worries. The salutation "vitarasi dehinAM

niravadhiM vR^iShashaila nidhim" attests to the fact that even a lowly creature (dehinAm) is granted the highest reward of the Feet of Lord Srinivasa (vR^iShashaila nidhim). The usage "vitarasi" is varthamAnam (present tense). Therefore, it must be understood that all wealth that one possesses comes about on account of the grace of Daya Devi. Thus, even our present state is the result of Daya Devi's anugraham. In the Vairagya Panchakam stotram Svami Desikan declares "dhAnamuShTimuce kucelamunaye dattesma vitteshatAm" to denote the fact that Sudama by merely offering a handful or two of flattened rice to Lord Krishna gained untold riches. On a superficial level this denotes wealth as commonly understood. However, the inner meaning is that due to the Daya of Lord KrishNa, Sudama gained Kaimkarya Sri, which is lasting and permanent."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin "Oh Daya Devi of Lord Srinivasa! There are other Daya murtis pertaining to so many men and Devas. If one resorts to any of them, what is vouchsafed is only a meager reward, transitory, non-permanent, and never satisfactory. Even if one gains such a reward, it entails only subsequent misery and hardship.

When we resort to You, however, the fruits are rich, rewarding, and pleasing. This is because, You have in Your paraphernalia, great virtues, such as unerring shakti, vast generosity, etc as assistants so to say. The result is that anyone, any being, who has resorted to You, Oh Daya Devi! gets surely and securely, Lord Srinivasa Himself! What more is needed? The Lord Srinivasa becomes a veritable possession of the one, who has surrendered to Daya Devi."



Slokam 57

सकरुण लौकिक प्रभु परिग्रह निग्रहयोः

नियतिम् उपाधि चक्र परिवृत्ति परम्परया ।

वृषभ महिधरेश करुणे वितरङ्गयतां

श्रुति मित सम्पदि त्वयि कथं भविता विशयः ॥ ५७ ॥

sakaruNa laukika prabhu parigraha nigrahayoH

niyatim upAdhi chakra parivR^itti paramparayA|

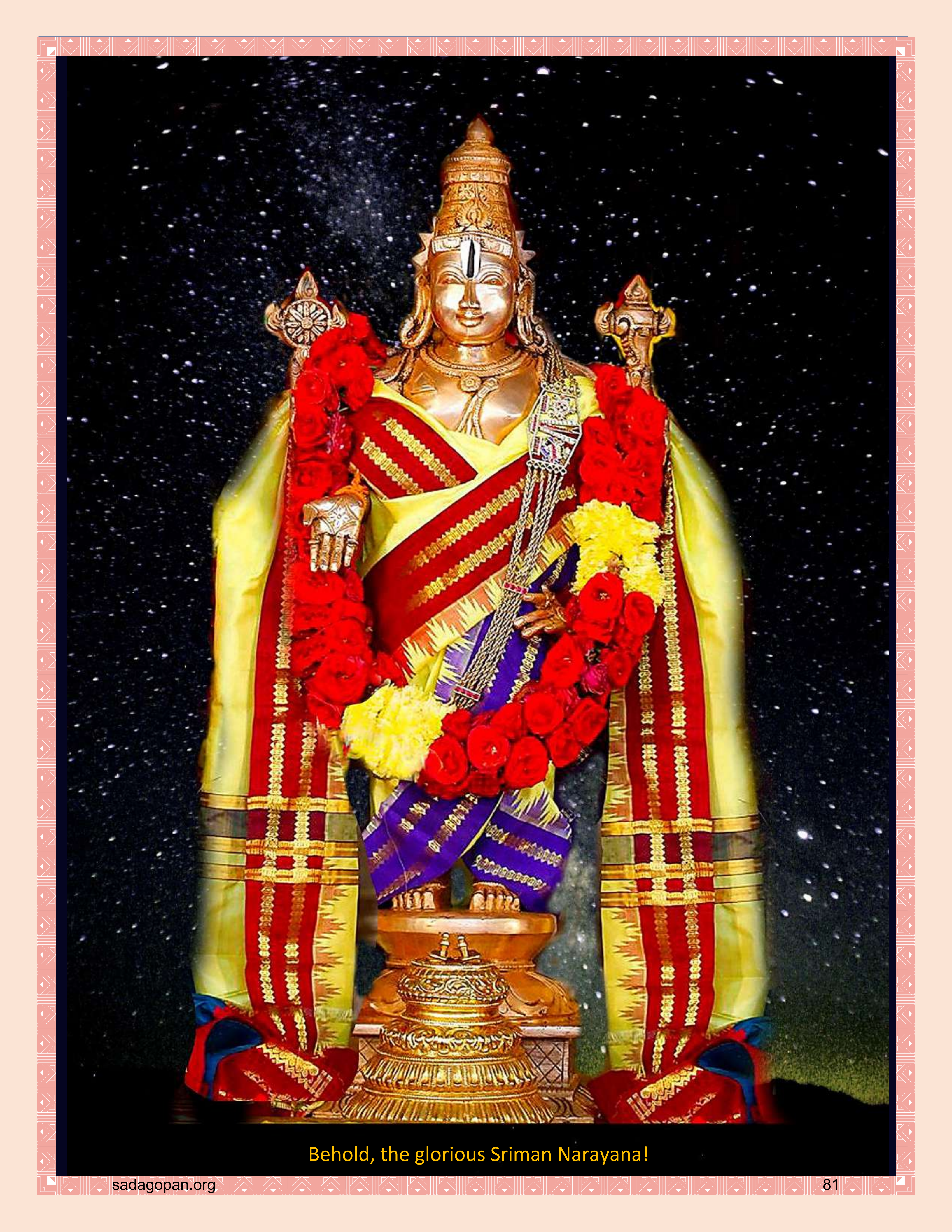
vR^iShabha mahidharesha karuNe! vitara~NgayatAM

shR^iti mita sampadi tvayi kathaM bhavitA vishayaH||57



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "sakaruNa laukika prabhu parigraha nigrahayoH niyatim upAdhi chakra parivR^itti paramparayA vR^iShabha mahidharesha karuNe! vitara~NgayatAM shR^iti mita sampadi tvayi kathaM bhavitA vishayaH." This is another gem from Svami Desikan. Those who receive Daya Devi's grace are blessed with undying wealth of Kaimarya Sri for Lord Narayana. Who begets this? Svami Desikan answered this in the previous verse through the description "dehinAm" to denote any creature without regard to status, caste, creed, gender, affiliation, and without discrimination between wealthy and poor or well-read and unskilled. This gives rise to an important question whether common people like us, who have engaged in sinful acts previously, are currently engaged in these acts and will engage in these acts in future, become privy to the grace of Daya Devi? Some may be under the impression that Daya Devi's anugraham is meant for pious ones and not for them who are replete with flaws. Furthermore, if they incur the grace of Daya Devi, She Herself could be defiled on account of association with them. Therefore, they consciously attempt to stay far away from Daya Devi. This is captured in Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram salutation "emperumAnin pirathai kaNDu vilakuvOrkaL vAzhntu keTTArkal" gained from Svami Kidambi appuLLAr (Svami Desikan's Acharya). This reflects the fact that those who consciously attempt to stay away from Lord Narayana, knowing fully well His Supreme nature and their own flawed state (due to an accumulation of sins) lead a wasted life.

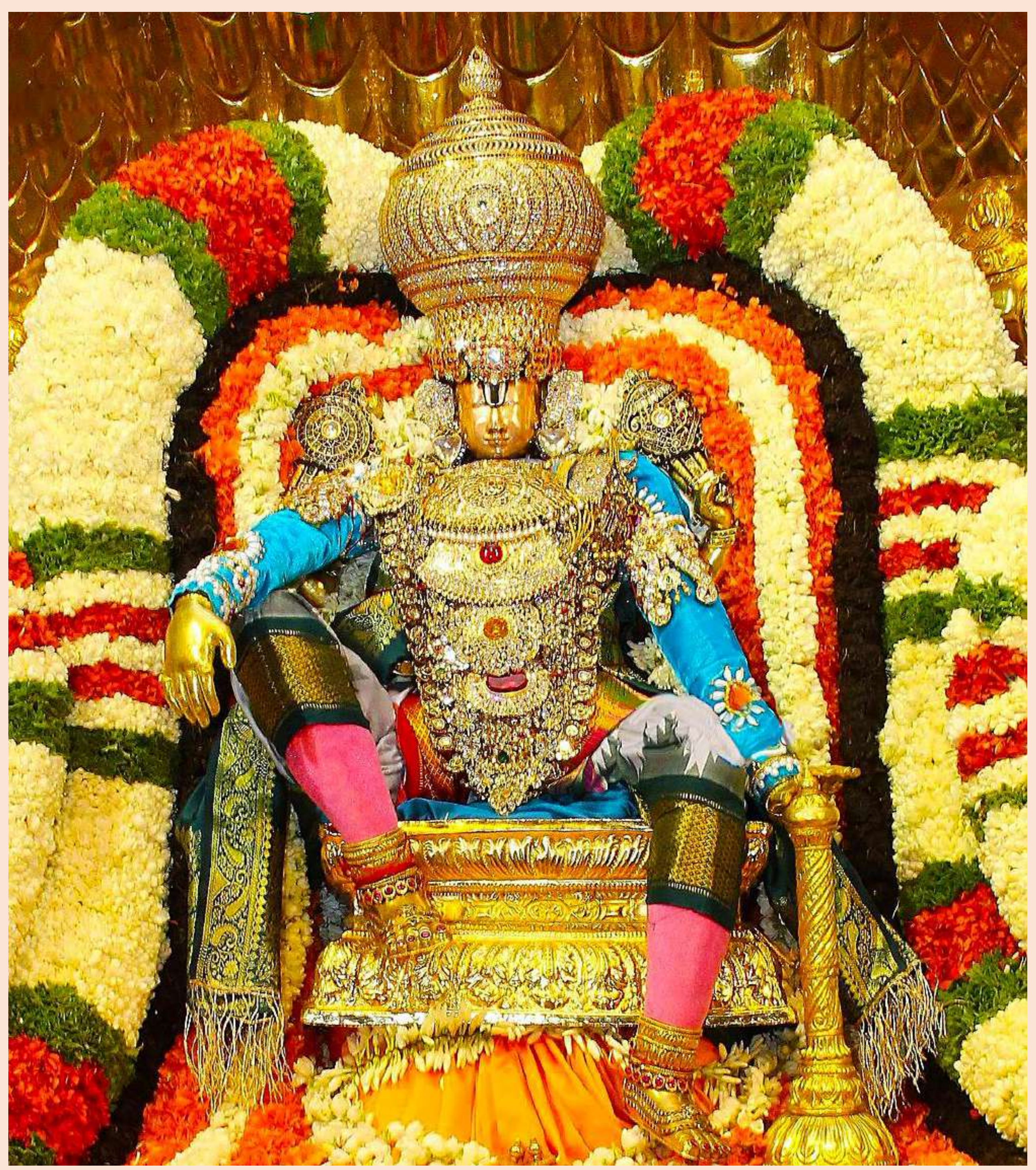


Behold, the glorious Sriman Narayana!

One must remember that even the current body conferred to us is meant for use in kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana and to seek the means for attaining Him. The body with sense organs is meant for beholding the glorious Lord Narayana, singing and listening to His kalyANa guNams and recounting His amazing feats, and engaging in service for Lord Narayana. On the other hand, if one stays away from Lord Narayana under the pretext that the Lord is the supreme being replete with auspicious qualities, while the individual is full of faults, it is indeed a pitiable and lowly state of existence. In fact, the rationale used by such individuals is "How can we dream of enjoying the Lord, who is being served by nithya suris?" Svami Desikan provides an apt comparison for this state through the declaration "dharmikar vaitta taNNIr pantalai azhippAr pOlE" (This is akin to defiling the shelter erected by pious ones for offering relief from the summer heat. Namely if one, who is extremely lowly by virtue of an enormous sin pile accumulated over a long time, drinks water from the shelter erected by pious ones, it causes the water to become impure and thus unfit for consumption by others. This is one class of individuals. Another group has the mindset that out of love for the Lord, they desire no stigma to come to the Lord and are therefore willing to accept any and all negative consequences for themselves. Hence, they stay away from the Lord). The latter is illustrated through an instance of the Uttara Kandam portion of the Ramayana.

Lord Rama is contemplating His return to Sri Vaikuntam and has Lakshmana guarding the entrance to His palace with strict orders to not let anyone come in, while He is engaged in a discussion with a deva kumara (who is none other than Yama). The orders come with the threat of grave consequences to Lakshmana, namely if the instruction is violated, it will result in his death. At this juncture, sage Durvasa arrives and demands that Lakshmana let him in to see Lord Rama. Lakshmana is caught in a dilemma. On the one hand if he denies Durvasa entry, the sage's anger will be easily aroused and would result in a curse for Lord Rama Himself. On the other hand, if he allows Durvasa to go inside, Lakshmana would lose his life. Lakshmana after a great deal of thought resolves that it is better to give up his life rather than some curses being inflicted on the Lord, causing considerable harm to the Lord. This is reflected in the Ramayanam tribute "yadi prItirmahArAja yadyanugrAhyatA mayi jahi mAm nirvisha~NkastvaM pratij~nAm paripAlaya". The import of the tribute is that Lakshmana allowed Durvasa to go in and see Lord Rama due to the fact that he did not want any harm to come to the Lord but instead was willing to be punished with death. Here Lakshmana was a sheShabhUtan - one engaged in kaimkaryam for Lord Rama every moment. Any thought of harm accruing to the Lord was untenable. Hence, he was willing to give

up his own life in order to ensure the Lord's well-being. In a like manner, there are individuals, who out of fear that that their association may bring stigma to the Lord elect to stay away from the Lord. Sensing this, Lord Narayana declares "Do not move away from Me. I have taken root at the Venkatam hill only for your sake."



Do not move away from Me!

Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram “vinayEn vina tIr maruntanAi viNNOr talaiva! Kecava! Mania cEr Ayar kula mutalE mA mAyanE! mAtavA! cinaiyEi tazhaiya marAmarankal Ezhum eitAi cirItarA inayAi inaiya peyarinAi enRu naivan aDiyEnE” eloquently documents the fact that he is the lowest among the lowly ones due to committing sins of great magnitude over a long period of time. Despite this, the compassionate Lord Narayana (Kesava), who is respectfully saluted by the nithya sUris, who exudes compassion even towards those who spurn his offer of refuge, who has taken residence in Gokulam, and is ready to serve as the panacea. Lord Krishna carried with Him a stick that is used to bend the grass so that the cows that He is leading can get their feed effortlessly, almost analogous to spoon feeding of the cows. This describes His affection for those who have surrendered to Him. The import of this Pasuram is that Lord Narayana offers solace to those who remain far away from the Lord due to having sinned greatly and as a consequence fear that the Lord could incur great harm.

The Lord comes through with the assurance “Do not stay away from Me. I have the medicine for curing your afflictions.” Svami Desikan provides a laukika (common worldly) perspective in this Daya Satakam verse and illustrates how Daya Devi’s grace prevails even for those who may deliberately choose to stay away from Her. The laukika perspective is housed in the tribute “sakaruNa laukika prabhu parigraha nigrahayoH niyatim upAdhi chakra parivR^itti paramparayA.” There is a king of a vast kingdom. He exudes compassion towards his subjects. He always acts in a manner to ensure the well-being of his subjects. What is the reason of this disposition on his part? Even a small act of his subjects that pleases him causes him to shower his benevolence on them. Whereas it takes actions of an extremely grave nature, to incur his displeasure resulting in punishment for his subjects. This laukika perspective applicable to commonly known kings and their subjects is directly applicable to Daya Devi. The salutation “vR^iShabha mahidharesha karuNe! vitara~NgayatAM shR^iti mita sampadi tvayi kathaM bhavitA vishayaH” from this verse becomes important here. Only when one relentlessly engages in forbidden actions constantly adding to one’s sin-pile does it invoke the anger of Lord Srinivasa and result in punishment. However, a mere trace of good actions even performed involuntarily, is sufficient to invoke the grace of Daya Devi, which causes the Lord to look upon the individual favorably and shower His blessings. This practice, which is commonly encountered in the manner of dispensing justice by a king to his subjects, applies exactly in the same manner when it comes to Lord Narayana dispensing His grace or meting out punishment. Therefore, one need not have any doubt about the fact the Daya Devi will grace them despite the fact the individual

has engaged in sinful acts in the past, continues to engage in sinful acts at the present with no guarantees of not committing sins in future. A trivial act of good undertaken by the individual even inadvertently is used as a pretext by Daya Devi to secure the bountiful blessings of Lord Srinivasa for the individual. Therefore, the individual need not fear anything and stay away from Lord Srinivasa due to the mistaken notion of being unfit for receiving the grace of Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa. In the first battle between Lord Rama and Ravana, the latter grows weary of fighting and faints in his chariot. Ravana's charioteer steers the chariot away from the battlefield towards Ravana's palace beating a hasty retreat. When Ravana recovers from his swoon, he chastises his charioteer for bringing him disrepute due to retreating from an important battle. Lord Rama offers comfort to Ravana "You have fought hard and well today. Since you are exhausted, go back to your palace, rest well and come back to fight tomorrow." The inner meaning of Lord Rama's message is that even in the intervening time between going back to his palace and returning to fight again the next day, if Ravana changes his disposition and restores Sita to Lord Rama, the Lord will forgive Ravana for all his misdeeds and grace him. Namely, Lord Rama is looking for a very simple act of reform from Ravana, while remaining ready to shower His grace. It is helpful to keep in context the fact that Ravana has committed the maha aparadham of separating Sita from Lord Rama. This act is definitely worthy of punishment. However, Lord Rama's compassion knows no bounds in that even for one that has sinned so greatly, a simple act of repentance for his misdeed and as a consequence a token act of goodness in restoring Sita to Lord Rama would secure the lasting grace of Lord Rama. Only when this did not happen did Lord Rama mete out punishment to Ravana through killing. The same applies to the Lord meting out punishment to Hiranyakasipu, Sishupala et al. Even in their case, although the Lord had to kill them, they gained an elevated state as a result. Therefore, even if one is an "ArdhrAparadhi" (one ceaselessly engaged in sinful acts), a mere inadvertent act of good performed involuntarily (alpa sukR^itam) is sufficient to invoke the grace of Lord Narayana. When this is the logic used by common kings to dispense justice, do we even have to mention that the same prevails with respect to Lord Narayana is a rhetorical question raised by Svami Desikan. This alpa sukR^itam resulting in the bountiful blessings of Lord Narayana comes about due to the kataksham of one's Acharya. In order to beget Acharya kataksham, one needs to have Ishvara sauhArdham (kind disposition of Lord Narayana towards the individual), jAyamAna kaTAkSham (the katakshaam of Lord Narayana), advesham (lack of enmity towards Lord Narayana), abhimukhyam (undertaking a trivial act that pleases Lord Narayana), yadR^iccika sukR^itam

(something good that is inadvertently performed perhaps involuntarily) and sAtvika sambhAShaNam (engaging in conversation with the pious ones). Once the Acharya kataksham is gained, one need not have any worries. The Acharya ensures the well-being of the individual by guiding him on the right path and by performing Bharanyasam for him. This trivial act on the part of the individual resulting in the enormous benefit of attaining moksham, thereby gaining paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam, is brought about due to the intervention of Daya Devi.



Daya Devi is there by EmperumAn's side to ensure the protection of Prapannas

Thus, if one encounters difficulties, it must be understood that these adverse consequences come about due to some apacharam committed towards Daya Devi or Lord Srinivasa. Hence, the common worldly maxim that applies to a king dispensing his grace or meting out punishment to his subjects carries over identically when it comes to Lord Narayana gracing an individual or punishing them.

Therefore, one need not worry about their eligibility for receiving the grace of Lord Narayana on the grounds that they are terribly flawed. Azhvar prabandham glorifies Lord Narayana as "akalil akaluvAn aNukil aNukuvAn" to denote the fact that if we stay away from Lord Narayana, He too will stay away from us. If we get close to him, He will become extremely close to us. This is the dictum that applies in the context of this Daya Satakam verse. A trivial act of good committed unknowingly results in the enormous grace of Lord Narayana. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to perform some token act of good in order to invoke the grace of Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patracharian Svamin:

"We come across great Lords and powerful administrators, who rule over a large retinue of servants. The Lord wisely acts in regard to each individual, carefully taking into account the latter's good deeds, sincerity, and failure, violation, treacherousness as the case may be. We then proceed from the known to the unknown. The Lord of the universe, Srinivasa, is all powerful and omniscient. Can He be ignorant of my faults and failures? Is He not present in my heart to know what it thinks? So He considers all acts and disposes appropriately and judiciously.

The Lord is full of Daya. He is far too generous as well. Nevertheless, He disposes of each case with a deliberative consideration of the plus points and minus points. He is not an unkind ruler. He is most sympathetic. He cannot indeed bear one's grief. But on that score, He will not act as an indiscriminate ruler. Sastras guide him. Daya Devi is indeed a storehouse of Sastraic judgement.

1. First off it is emphasized that this does not constitute a doubt in the efficacy of Daya Devi. It inspires faith in us to act righteously. Also the rule of the law (Sastras) reigns supreme.

2. Daya flows to all; we have nothing to fulfill. The Lord's mercy is spontaneous and does not have a conditioning factor stemming from a human being's action, is not subscribed to by SvamI Desikan. His worldly illustration is a certain guidance to us.

3. Some other commentators like Sri. U.Ve. Anbil Gopalachariar Svamin view this slokam as emphasizing Maha-Visvasam for a Prapanna. We behold in the mudane world rich Lords acting appropriately in regard to their servants, taking into account their faithfulness and insincerity as the case may be. In a similar manner, the Lord acts. Have full confidence. He will never let down a Prapanna. Daya Devi is there by His side to ensure this."

Slokam 58

वृषगिरिकृष्णमेघजनितां जनितापहरां

त्वदभिमतिं सुवृष्टिमुपजीव्य निवृत्ततृषः।

बहुषु जलाशयेषु बहुमानमपोह्य दये

न जहति सत्पथं जगति चातकवत् कृतिनः॥ ५८॥

vR^iShagirikR^iShNameghajanitAM janitApaharAM

tvadabhimatiM suvR^iShTimupajIvya nivR^ittatR^iShaH|

bhahuShu jalAshayeShu bahumAnamapohya daye

na jahati satpathaM jagati cAtakavat kR^itinaH||58



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "vR^iShagiri kR^iShNa megha janitAM janitApaharAM tvadabhimatiM suvR^iShTim upajIvya nivR^itta tR^iShaH bhahuShu jalAshayeShu bahumAnam apohya daye na jahati satpathaM jagati chAtakavat kR^itinaH" This sixth decad houses verses that provide a similarity between the Daya flow and Ganga flow in that they both destroy the papams and tapams of their seekers and render them fit to undertake kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. In the previous verse Svami Desikan provided an assurance to common folks who out of intense sense of self-deprecation, may elect to stay away from the Lord out of fear that their lowly state is undeserving of the Lord's grace. Specifically, Svami Desikan declares in the previous verse, that one's enormous sin-pile is not a bar for approaching the Lord and therefore not to stay away from Lord Srinivasa. A surrender to the feet of Daya Devi will take care of this issue and pave the way for their upliftment. This verse and the following two verses highlights the glory of Saranagati. Specifically, Svami Desikan states here that those who perform Saranagati to Lord Srinivasa are free of burden. In fact, those who have surrendered to Daya Devi are even more carefree. There is a bird known as cAtaka pakShi. This verse undertakes a comparison between the states of those who perform Saranagati and the cAtaka bird. The cAtaka bird only partakes of fresh water arising from rain and discards all other water sources and water bodies. The cAtaka bird has a hole below its neck.



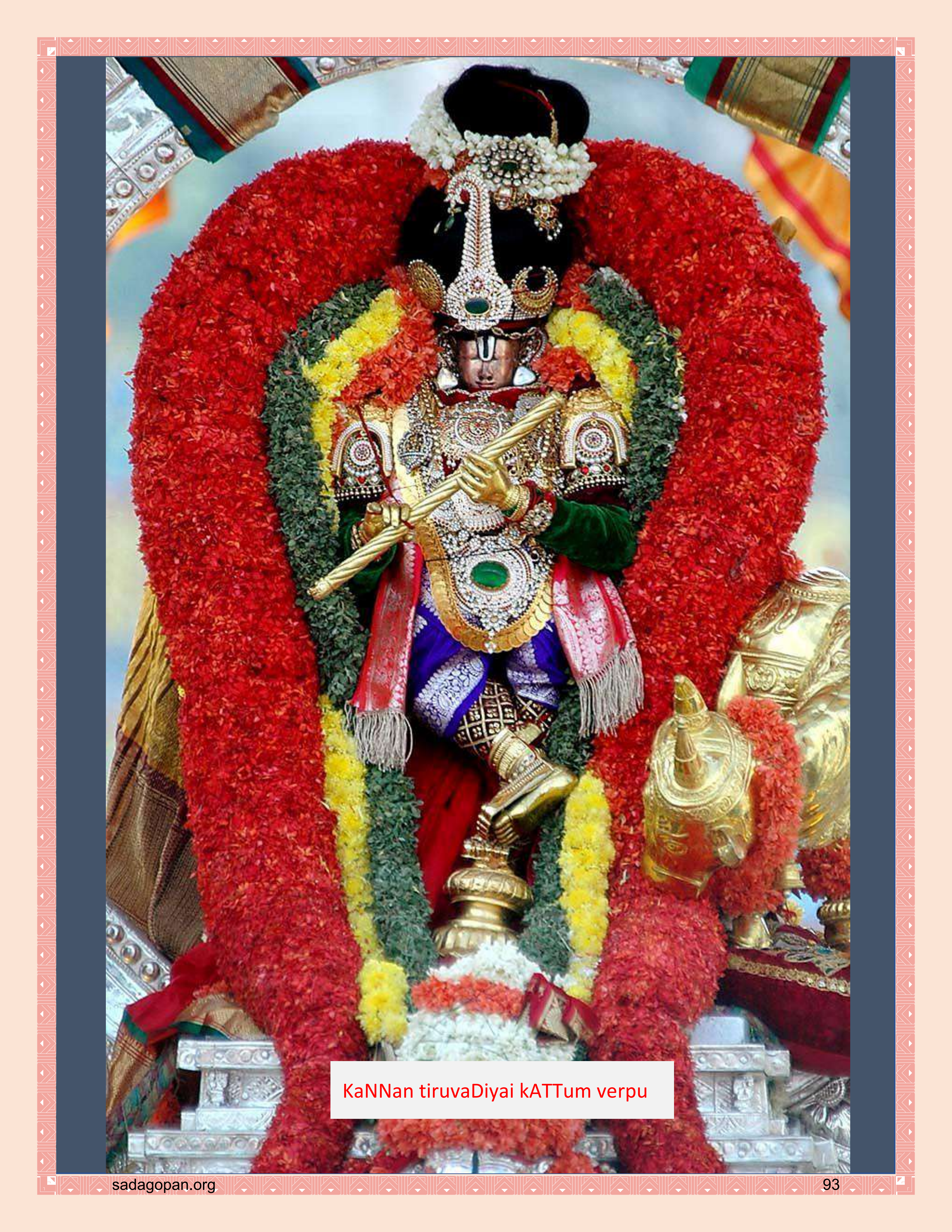
ChAtaka Bird

Due to this fact, when the bird bends and partakes of water from any other water body, the water comes out of the hole. Only fresh water from rain goes through the throat of the cAtaka bird , which raises its head upwards and opens its mouth to partake of the rain water. Once satiated in this manner, the cAtaka bird exhibits a total disregard for all other water bodies be it a lake, river, or ocean. Likewise too, is the behavior of those who have surrendered to Lord Srinivasa/Daya Devi. For rain to arrive there needs to be water bearing clouds ready to cause rainfall. This is described in the tribute "jagati kR^itinaH" of this verse. "kR^itinaH" denotes those who have accomplished that which needs to be accomplished. These are verily BhAgyavAns (fortunate ones). What is it that needs to be accomplished? In a common world perspective this could mean protecting one's family - educate kids well, identify suitable avenues of employment for them, and get them married at the right age. Also, if one is fortunate enough to accumulate enough wealth leaving behind a large inheritance for one's children becomes an additional consideration of that which needs to be accomplished. However, this is not what Svami Desikan means by what needs to be accomplished. Instead, it is the responsibility to ensure the well-being of the Atma. Specifically, performing Bharanyasam to ensure the protection of the Atma is what Svami Desikan intends through the usage "kR^itinaH" Therefore, the term "kR^itinaH" in this verse refers to those who have performed Saranagati at the feet of Lord Narayana. One may think that it is one's duty to accumulate a lot of wealth and leave that behind for their progeny. However, the purport of the term "kR^itinaH" is intended to motivate these people to think along the lines "A child has been born in our Srivaishnava family. As the child's father, I need to take

steps to safeguard the well-being of the child's Atma by ensuring that Bharanyasam is performed for the child." In the Agraharam of Navalpakkam, there lived a great Acharya, Ayya Devanatha Tatacharya Svami. He used to perform Bharanyasam for cows and calves in his goshala, with the view that they were dependent on him for their protection and that he needed to ensure the well-being of their Atma. This was performed with the sole objective of redeeming the jivan and ensuring that the jivan would beget moksham at the end of their earthly existence. The actions of "kR^itinaH" (those who have performed Bharanyasam) are described through the salutation "vR^iShagiri kR^iShNa megha janitAM janitApaharAM". "niravadhimahAnanda brahmAnubhUtikutUhalI jagati bhavitA kashcit dAivAt jihAsita samshR^itiH" is the salutation from Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram that describes a fortunate few that have performed what needs to be performed by "kR^itinaH". This highlights the fact that only a few blessed ones have the inclination to rid themselves of the bondage of Karma that binds them to their earthly existence and desire to enjoy the supreme Lord Narayana, who is immeasurable. These are the ones denoted by "kR^itinaH" - those who have surrendered to Lord Srinivasa/Daya Devi. Their actions are in the manner of the cAtaka bird. The CAtaka bird is yearning to see the dark rain-bearing cloud. The cloud seeks refuge in a mountain. The analogy with Saranagatas is made complete by noting that the dark rain-bearing cloud is none other than Lord Krishna. In this case Lord Krishna as Srinivasa has sought refuge in the Venkatam hill. The usage Krishna is employed to describe the dark rain-bearing cloud. Only when the cloud bears rain is it dark in color. Otherwise, it is white in color. In this instance the description also fits Lord Srinivasa in keeping with the tribute of Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "kunRam yEnti kuLir mazhai kAttavan anRu j~nAlam aLanda pirAn paran cenRu cEr tiruvEnkaTa mAmalai onRumE tozha nam vinai OyumE". Svami Desikan glorifies the sacred Venkatam hill in the sthala visheSha adhikAram of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram as "KaNNan aDyinai emakku kATTum verpu kaDu vinayar Iru vinaiyum kaDiyum verpu tinnamitu vIDena tikazhum verpu telinda perum tIrttankaL cerinta verpu punniyattin pukalitena pukazhum verpu ponnulakil pOkamellAm punarkkum verpu vinnavarum mannavarum virumpum verpu vEnkaTa verpena vilankum vEta verpE" "verpu" denotes mountain. In this context, the sacred Venkatam hill reveals to us the lotus feet of Lord Krishna (Srinivasa) as described in the salutation "KaNNan aDyinai emakku kATTum verpu". This highlights the fact that Lord Srinivasa is no different from Lord Krishna. This megham known as Lord Krishna has sought refuge in the Venkatam hill as captured by the tribute "vR^iShagiri kR^iShNa megha janitAM" in

the manner of a cloud seeking refuge in a mountain. This sacred Venkatam hill has the characteristic of ridding one of their karma (puNyam and papam) as documented in the salutation "vinayar Iru vinaiyum kaDiyum verpu". The eulogy "tinnamitu vIDena tikazhum verpu" glorifies the fact that the Venkatam hill is verily Sri Vaikuntam. This train of thought is further expounded upon in verse 100 of the Daya Shatakam through the tribute "na ataH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM mAtar daye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam|baddhAdaro vR^iShagiri praNayI yathA(a)sau muktAnu bhUtimiha dAsyati me mukundaH" where Svami Desikan implores to Daya Devi to grant him the bliss of rendering SAmagAnam (hau hau) that arises in Sri Vaikuntam, in the Venkatam hill itself. The "tinnamitu vIDena" glorification captures the fact that when one arrives at the Venkatam hill and prostrates before Lord Srinivasa, it is verily the same experience as that gained from attaining Sri Vaikuntam. Svami Desikan further states that Sri Vaikuntam is replete with joy no doubt. However, the Venkatam hill described in the tribute "telinda perum tIrttankaL cerinta verpu punniyattin pukalitena pukazhum verpu ponnulakil pOkamellAm punarkkum verpu" is capable of conferring the same blissful anubhavam of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam as Sri Vaikuntam. This Venkatam hill has been sought as a place of refuge by Lord Krishna himself. Returning to the tribute "vR^iShagiri kR^iShNa megha janitAM janitApaharAM", we then examine what is it that arises from this Krishna megham (Krishna cloud known as Lord Srinivasa)? The reference here is to the usage "janitAm" which denotes the water arising from the cloud. What does this water do? It causes "janitApaharAM". The common rain-bearing cloud provides welcome relief from the summer heat and sultriness. The "kR^iShNa megham" known as Lord Srinivasa destroys the tapam arising from saamsaram. There are three kinds of tapams arising from samsaram - AdhyAtmikam (that arising from the body for example lack of Atma j~nAnam), Adhi bhauktikam (Lack of rains, earthquakes and the like), and Adi daivikam (totally unexpected difficulties and calamities). The salutation "janitApahAram" refers to the fact the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa showers water that destroys these tapams and rids one of the seemingly interminable cycle of births and deaths as depicted in the salutation "punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam punarapi jananI jaThare shayanam". In the YAdavAbhyudayam mahakavyam, Svami Desikan discusses the vR^ittAntam (life story) of Putana. Therein, Svami Desikan states that Lord Krishna heartily partook of her breast milk. In that process, he ensured that she will never be able to offer breast milk again, namely, Lord Krishna freed Putana from the cycle of births and deaths by granting her Moksham. Not only that, but also those who hear the vR^ittAntam of Putana are assured of the benefit of

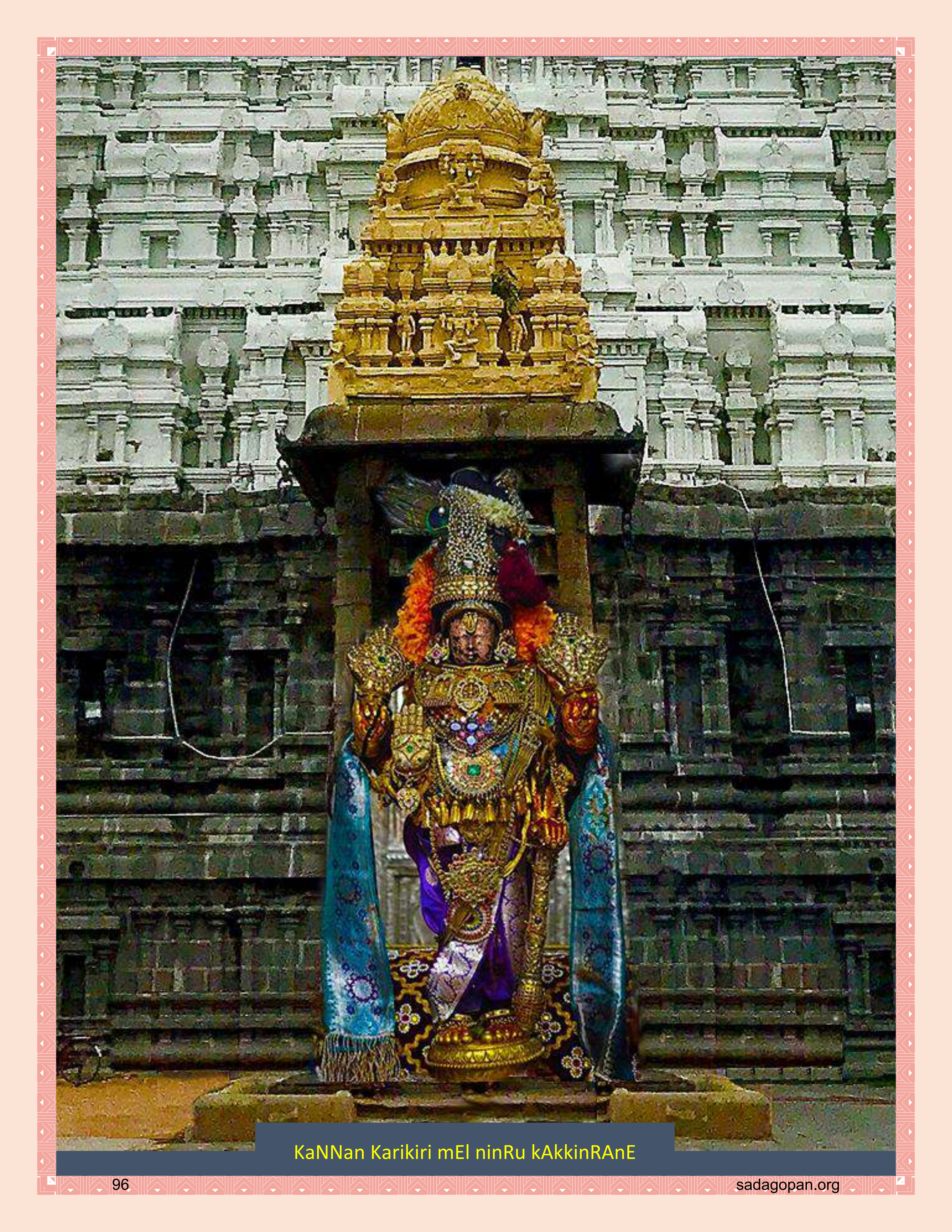
moksham. Therefore, the water from the Krishna megham rids one of jani tApam, whereas rain from a common cloud only rids one of sultriness arising from summer heat. The rain from the Krishna Megham is saluted as "tvadabhimatiM suvR^iShTim" to denote the rainfall known as the abhimAnam of Daya Devi. What is the abhimAnam of Daya Devi? It lies in Her emphatic declaration "This being is mine. He belongs to Me". This abhimAnam of Daya Devi gushes forth as the rain water from the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa. The inner meaning is that when Acharyas perform Saranagati for Sishyas and unite them with Lord Narayana, they submit as sankalpam "This individual belongs to me" as evidenced by the tribute "madIya tvenabhimathasya asya cetanasya". When the Acharyas declare thus, it is impossible for Lord Narayana to reject their plea on behalf of the jivan. The Lord has no choice but to grant succor to the jivan. This is the reason for all Saranagatas to seek out an Acharya to perform Bharanyasam. Svami Alavandar in the Stotra Ratnam submits an impassioned appeal in the verse "kadA punaH sha~Nkha rathA~Nga kalpaka dhvajAravindhA~Nkusha vajralAncanam trivikramatvat caraNAmbujadvayaM madIya mUrdhAnamala~NkariShyati" (I cannot wait for the moment when the Lotus feet of Trivikrama replete with shanka rekha and other emblems will rest on my head). In another verse of the Stotraratnam, SvamI ALavandar declares "raghuvara yadabhustvaM tAdR^isho vAyasasya praNata iti dayALuryacca caidyasya kR^iShNa pratibhavam aparAddhurmugdha sayujyado bhUH vada kimapadamAgastasya te(a)sti kShamAyAH (Have I sinned so greatly like kakasura in Your avataram as Rama or as Sishupala in Your Krishna avataram? What is the unforgivable offence that I have committed? Please let me know what I have done to deserve this state of not being privy to Your grace.) When Svami Alavandar realizes that the Lord is unmoved by this submission, he uses the BrahmAstram so to speak in the tribute "pitamaham nAthamunim vilokya prasIda madvR^ittamacintayitva" which denotes the fact that he belongs to his grandfather, Svami Nathamuni Acharya. Given this, it becomes impossible for the Lord to reject his appeal. Here Daya Devi incarnates as an Acharya as attested by the salutation from a prior verse "divyApA~NgaM dishasi karuNe eShu saddesikAtma kShipraM prAptA vR^iShagiripatiM kShatrabandhvA dayaste vishvAcArya vidhishivamukhAH svAdhikaroparuddhAH manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^ishe tvam". This reflects the fact that once an individual is the beneficiary of the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi, the individual immediately gains the benefit of moksham even if he has sinned greatly in the manner of Kshatrabandhu. The usage of "suvR^iShTi" in this verse needs to be noted since Svami Desikan is renowned for his careful choice of words. suvR^iShTi



KaNNan tiruvaDiyai kATTum verpu

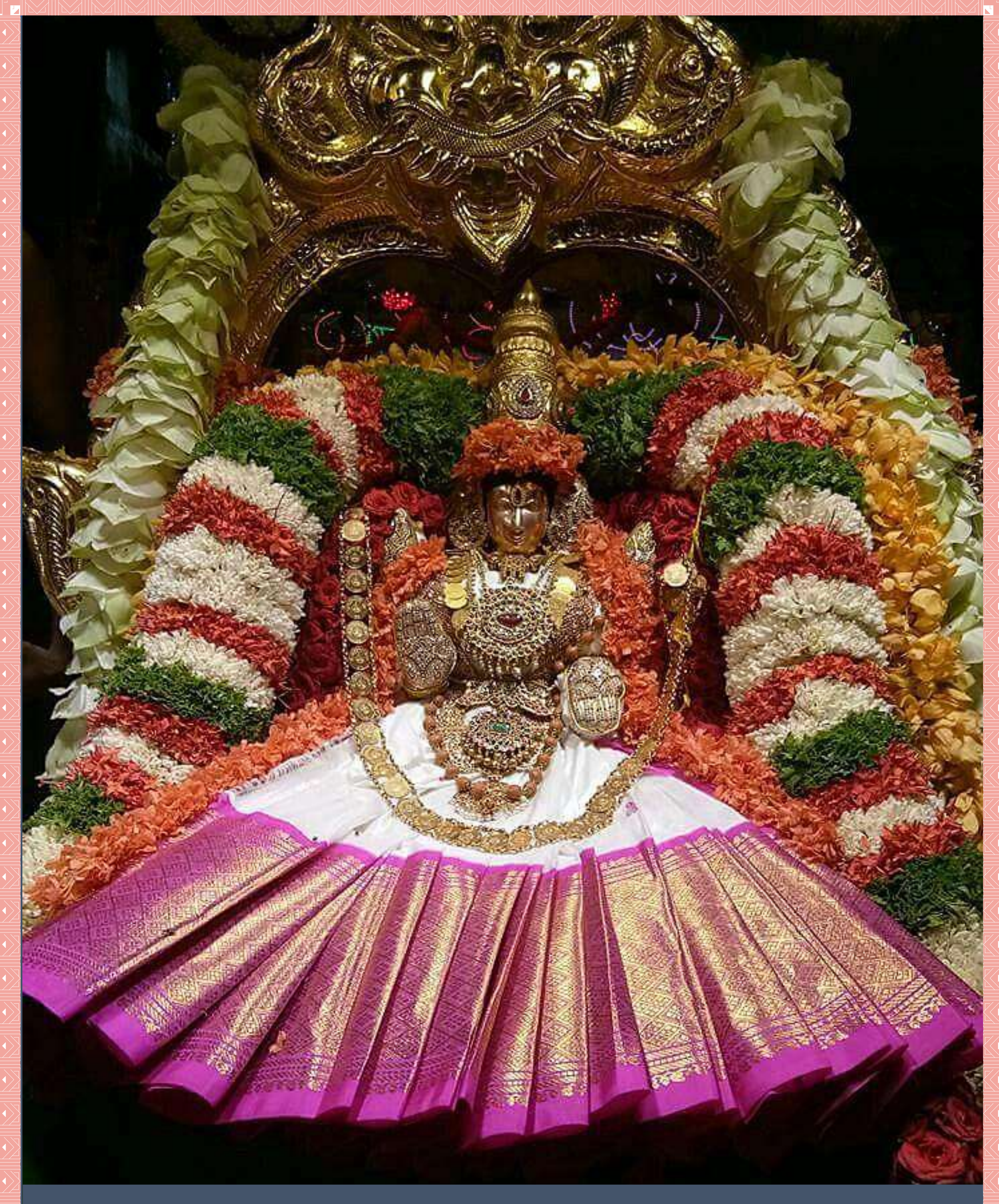
denotes rainfall that facilitates the obtaining of fruits, whereas duvR^iShTi is the rainfall that is destructive in nature and does not facilitate gaining any fruits. In this instance, the rainwater known as Daya Devi readily facilitates obtaining the bliss of eternal Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. As per Sri Andal's Tiruppavai salutation "mummAri peitu", the rainfall should arrive three times with ten-day gaps in between. Such rainfall is extremely conducive for crop growth. On the other hand, if there is torrential rain when the crops and grain are ready for harvesting, it denotes duvR^iShTi. The abhimAnam of Daya Devi is suvR^iShTi - it greatly aids crop growth and their harvesting. Next the tribute "suvR^iShTim upajIvya" of this verse is examined. Once one has partaken of the rainfall known as Daya Devi abhimAnam, the Saranagata's thirst is satiated and hence discards all other offerings in the manner of the CAtaka bird which quenches its thirst exclusively with rain water, which is extremely pure, and does not care for the offering from other bodies of water. There is an important difference though between the Krishna megham delivering the rainfall of Daya abhimAnam and the ordinary cloud delivering rain by absorbing water from the salty ocean. The former dispenses water that was offered at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa by Sri Bhashyakarar as documented in the YatirAja saptati salutation "kAlena karishAila kR^iShNajaladAH ka~NkSshAdhikaM varShati". It is helpful to examine the vR^ittAntam of Svami BhAshyakArar. He was a disciple of Yadavaprakasha. Fearful of Sri Bhashyakara's brilliance that would invalidate his entire exposition of Advaita, Yadhavaprakasha hatched a plot to kill Sri Bhashyakarar during a purported pilgrimage to Kashi with all his disciples. In the course of their sojourn, they had to cross a forest. At that time Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi Thayar in the form of a hunter and huntress, respectively, rescued Svami BhAshyakArar and brought him back to Kanchipuram within one night. Upon reaching Kanchipuram, they request Svami BhAshyakArar for water from a well to quench their thirst. By the time Svami returns with the water from the well, the hunter and huntress have disappeared. It may also be remembered that Svami BhAshyakArar regularly rendered tIrtha kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple at Kanchipuram. Thus, the reference to the tIrtham denoted by Daya Devi is a rendering of the tIrtham by SvAmi BhAshyakArar to the Divine Couple, being returned in the form of copious Daya flow from the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa. The residence of Lord Varadaraja is known as Karikiri (elephant shaped hill), which has become His refuge. Here, the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa has sought refuge in the Venkatam hill. The cloud of Lord Srinivasa is replete with water (rasa bharita). The equivalence between Lord Varadaraja and Lord Srinivasa is established through the Desika Prabandham tribute "KaNNan

Karikiri mEl ninRu kAkkinRAnE". Then it becomes easy to understand the delivery of tIrtham submitted to Lord Varadaraja by Svami BhAshyakArar as a rendering of the Daya flow by the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa. The logic used here is A=B=C. Both Lord Srinivasa and Lord Varadaraja represent Lord Krishna. Thus, the ordinary cloud delivers rainfall from absorbing water from the salty ocean. However, the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa showers the rainfall known as Daya and is therefore replete with the rasam of Daya (dayA rasa bharita). Both forms of cloud are accompanied by lightning. In the case of the common cloud, lightning needs no explanation. However, in the case of the Krishna megham, the lightning denotes Thayar. She is the constant companion of Lord Srinivasa (never separated even for a moment) as seen from Svami NammAzhvAr's tiruvaimozhi tribute "akala illEn". The rainbow for the common cloud again requires no elaboration. In the case of the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa, the dazzling ornaments adorning His body provides the equivalence to a rainbow. When one has a darsanam of Lord Srinivasa, adorned with various ornaments one experiences the rainbow effect in that the dazzling light emanating from these ornaments actually reflect all the colors of the rainbow causing a mesmerizing effect, which produces matchless joy. The ordinary rain-bearing cloud is black in color due to being replete with water. The Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa is dark due to bearing the Daya rasam. The common cloud follows the direction of the wind to produce rainfall. For example, there may be dark rain-bearing clouds fully signifying the potential for rainfall in a given place. However, a strong wind can cause the cloud to change course and deliver rain in a neighboring region. Likewise, the Krishna megham, Lord Srinivasa, delivers the rainfall of Daya Devi based on the discretion of Acharyas, which serves as the wind. The inner meaning is that Acharyas identify jivans, that are fitting receptacles of the Daya rasam from the Krishna megham of Lord Srinivasa. The Acharya's declaration "This jivan belongs to me" is an indication for Lord Srinivasa to confer the rainfall in the form of Daya rasam. The common cloud delivers rain which provides welcome relief from the sultriness of the summer heat. The Krishna megham, Lord Srinivasa, renders the rainfall of Daya rasam, which relieves the heat arising due to samsaric afflictions as evidenced by the "janitApaharAm" tribute of this verse. The common cloud offers shelter by way of coolness to those suffering from the intense summer heat. The Krishna megham of Lord Srinivasa destroys the unbearable heat of suffering arising from the enormous sin-pile of jivans accumulated from aeons, and instead focuses on some inadvertently performed good deed of the jivans to enable them to enjoy the cool comfort of Bhagavan. The common rain-bearing cloud yields


KaNNan Karikiri mEl ninRu kAkkinRAnE

water which is the life support for all beings. The Krishna megham of Lord Srinivasa delivers the water of Bhagavad anubhavam, the life support for Saranagatas. The rainfall of Daya Devi confers the benefit of vishokaH, vimR^ityuH, apahatapApma, apipAsaH, vijighatsaH satyakAma satyasankalpa, esha Atma for the suffering jivan. Brahman is described in the Candogya Upanishad in terms of eight attributes of being ever free from sorrow, one who knows no death, sinless/blemishless one, one who knows no thirst, one who knows no hunger, one who is fond of the truth, one who wills the truth, and one who is of the nature of the Atma. The rainfall of Daya Devi ensures the jivan too is blessed with these attributes upon gaining moksham, thereby having a likeness to Lord Narayana. This is facilitated by Daya Devi by first destroying the enormous sin-pile of the jivan, which is a major obstacle to realizing this goal. The common cloud satiates the thirst of the CAtaka bird. The Krishna megham of Lord Srinivasa, satisfies the thirst of those who have completely surrendered to Him and regard Him as their sole refuge by granting them everything and more that they desire, namely the eternal bliss of Bhagavad Anubhavam. This is captured in the salutation "tvadabhimatiM suvR^iShTim upajIvya". This is the state of Saranagatas, who have experienced the satiating rainfall of Daya Devi and is documented in the tribute "bhahuShu jalAshayeShu bahumAnam apohya daye". The salutation "bhahuShu jalAshayeShu" from this verse denotes the state of the CAtaka bird whose thirst has been quenched by the fresh rainwater, that it was eagerly awaiting. Once its thirst is quenched, it exhibits a total disregard for the water from other sources like ponds, lakes, rivers, and ocean. When it comes to Saranagatas of Lord Srinivasa, their disposition is similar to that of the CAtaka bird. In the matter of dAnam, the foremost of them is anna dAnam and tIrtha dAnam. These are the only sumptuous offerings that leave the recipient with a feeling of fullness. All other offerings can leave the recipient longing for more. For example, if one receives a vastram by way of dAnam, there is always the possibility of being dissatisfied on the grounds that the giver is quite wealthy. Could he not have given more? Similar feelings can prevail when it comes to giving the dAnam of money. Thus, other forms of dAnam do not give rise to a feeling of paryApti - total satisfaction. Whereas this total satisfaction arises only from offerings of water or food. One can partake of water/food until the feeling of fullness sets in after which even if more is offered, it is refused. This is captured in the salutation "nivR^itta tR^iShaH" In the case of Saranagatas, the offering of Daya Devi is so sumptuous and filling that they reject the waters from all other sources in the manner of the CAtaka bird. The inner meaning of this tribute is that those Saranagatas, who have experienced the bliss from the offering of Daya Devi will

spurn the offerings from devatAntaras, who are subject to tri-guNas, in the same manner as the CAtaka bird, which is steadfast in its pursuit of fresh rainwater to quench its thirst and discards the offering from all other bodies of water. In the arthapancakAdhikaram of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan discusses the obstacles that come in the way of attaining moksham. Specifically, Svami Desikan states that bhagavad nigraham is a serious obstacle. This is incurred by undertaking some act that invokes the anger of Lord Narayana as described in the salutation "tannODu ozhuku sangiliyAlE kaTTuNDu uzhalukira kShetraj~nar kAlilE vizha paNNiyum". The import of this salutation is examined through an example. For example, there is a king. Other than the title, responsibilities, and paraphernalia, he is an individual just like any of us. He too is bound to samsaram on account of Karma. The same bond that ties me to samsaram also ties him. The difference may be only in the shackles that bind us. If Bhagavad nigraham prevails, it causes me to fall at the feet of the king, who is similarly bound to samsaram. The same analogy prevails with respect to worship of DevatAntaram. This is also echoed in the Varadaraja Pancashat salutation "kAragR^ihe kanaka shR^i~NkalayA(a)pi bandhaH" This refers to the state of one who wants to break free from Samsaram is akin to one who wants to be free but is offered residence as a prisoner bound by golden shackles instead of iron shackles. The key takeaway is that the state of DevatAntaras is similar to that of baddha jivans in that they are both bound to samsara. The difference lies in the fact that the former is bound by golden shackles, whereas the latter is bound by iron shackles. Therefore, both of them have the state of being prisoners, when it comes to bondage with samsaram. Thus, the former is never able to help the latter to break free from this bondage. When it comes to Saranagatas in the context of this Daya Satakam verse, they will never submit prayerful offerings to DevatAntara. In the VairAgya pancakam Svami Desikan declares "nAsti pitrArjitaM kincit na mayA kincitArjitam astime hastishailAgre vastupAitAmahaM dhanam." This reflects Swami's state as a ParamaIkAntin, wherein he states that he has no inheritance of wealth to speak about, nor does he have any earning of his own. However, he has one thing namely the highest wealth of Varadaraja, who has arrived at the top of the Hastigiri due to the yaj~na of Brahma. Therefore, there is no need for any other wealth. In a like manner, Saranagatas, who have surrendered to Daya Devi of Lord Srinivasa, exhibit total indifference towards the Daya offerings from other humans or DevatAntaram. Once Daya Devi of Lord Srinivasa declares that "these Saranagatas belong to me", they spurn the Daya offerings of all other humans and deities. This is evidenced in the salutation "bhahuShu jalAshayeShu bahumAnam apohya". These Saranagatas



Saranagatas, who have experienced the bliss from the offering of Daya Devi will spurn the offerings from devatAntaras.

remain steadfast in their following of the correct path as revealed by elders, who have distinguished themselves due to their anushTAanam, as reflected in the salutation "na jahati satpathaM jagati cAtakavat kR^itinaH" of this verse. The term satpatham has three meanings. First among them is the path revealed by "sat". It also denotes the path traversed by stars (nakShatrams) in the sky. Finally, it also means the wonderful path revealed by elders. These three meanings are examined further. The CAtaka bird traverses the skies without regard for the ground and is thus in the same path as the stars. When it comes to Saranagatas, the import is that they are steadfast in following the path laid down for them by their Acharyas. In the AcArya kR^ityAdhikAram of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan declares that "All the esoteric meanings revealed in this grantham are not invented by me. Instead, I am merely documenting what has been handed down to me by my illustrious Acharya. The exact statement is "IppaDi rahasyatrayatthai paRRina kIzhum mElum uLLa pAcurankaLai ellAm vEdAnta utayana sampradAyamAna maDaippaLLi vArttayai AcAryan pakkalilE tAm kETTaruLinapaDiyE kiDAmbi appuLLAr aDiyEnai kiLiyai pazhakkumApOlE pazhakki vaikka avar tiruvuLLatil irakkamaDiyAka perumAL teLiya prakacipittu maravAmal kAtthu pizhaiyara pecuvitta pAcurankaL" This reflects the fact that "this Sampradayam, which is vEdAnta utayana (rooted in the Vedas), was handed down in Rahasyam form to Svami Kidambi AcchAn, who had the distinction of madapaLLi kaimkaryam (for Svami BhAshyakArar), by SvAmi BhAshyakArar, was absorbed by aDiyEn's Acharya, Svami Kidambi AppuLLar through successive Acharyas in the line of Svami Kidambi AcchAn, who trained aDiyEn verily in the manner of training a parrot. The parrot merely repeats what it has been taught. In a like manner, these Pasurams have been rendered by me in the same manner as instructed by my Acharya Svami Kidambi AppuLLar, who ensured that there will be no omissions on my part due to forgetting his instruction and ensured that I received the grace of Bhagavan Hayagriva." This is indeed reflective of the "Satpatham" reference from this verse depicting the behavior of Saranagatas, who have surrendered to Daya Devi, and are steadfast in traversing the path laid down for them by their Acharyas. The cause of this Daya shower is the Krishna megham known as Lord Srinivasa. Thus, in this verse Svami Desikan has highlighted the similarity between the conduct of the CAtaka bird and Saranagatas, who have surrendered to Daya Devi".

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Certain fortunate individuals living an existence of dependence on the rain-water, like the proverbial CAtaka birds, whose thirst is quenched by the dark rich clouds (that constitute Lord Krishna or Lord Srinivasa)

getting satiated by this shower, thereafter spurning all kinds of water, be it a tank, pond, cess pool, pit, brook, or a river. Their thirst for bliss is totally satisfied by You. They would thereafter forsake all gods, all waters, and remain satisfied like a CAtaka bird with rain water.

1. The disposition of these gifted souls is called ParamaikAntyatvam.

2. It is important to recall the verse "trANe" from Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. The performance of Prapatti to secure the Lord's grace must be viewed as a mere pretext. The concept is that the Lord is an all-powerful manager disposing all matters in a free manner, unquestionable by anyone. The components of nyAsa or Bharasamarpanam are adjuncts. The prime factor is undoubtedly an independent force, Lord Srinivasa's Daya. Thus Daya Devi is a sovereign force."



Slokam 59

त्वदुदय तूलिकाभिरमुना वृषशैल जुषा

स्थिर चर शिल्पिनैव परिकल्पित चित्र धियः।

यतिपति यामुन प्रभृतयः प्रथयन्ति दये

जगति हितं न नस्त्वयि भरन्यसनादधिकम्॥५९॥

tvadu daya tUlikAbhiramunA vR^iShashaila juShA

sthira chara shilpinaiva parikalpita chitra dhiyaH|

yatipati yAmuna prabhR^itayaH prathayanti daye

jagati hitaM na nastvayi bharanyasanAdadhikam|| 59



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "This verse is "tvadu daya tUlikAbhiramunA vR^iShashaila juShA sthira chara shilpinaiva parikalpita chitra dhiyaH yatipati yAmuna prabhR^itayaH prathayanti daye jagati hitaM na nastvayi bharanyasanAdadhikam" The previous verse described the state of those who have performed Saranagati to Lord Srinivasa. How did this surrender come about? Who was instrumental for this? In what manner was this surrender performed? These undoubtedly come about due to Acharya anugraham. The four -fold purusharthas need to be sought by submitting a prayer to Lord Narayana. If a Saranagata seeks these from Devathantaras, their state is described by Svami Desikan as "rAjamahiShi maDipicchai kezhkirAppOlE" namely those who have performed Saranagati to Lord Narayana, beget the status of Rajamahishi (queen of the emperor). Therefore, protocol dictates that the queen needs to seek everything from the emperor. Instead if she takes to the streets with a begging bowl, it would be most inappropriate for her status. Furthermore, it is considered insulting to Lord Narayana. Therefore, all things need to be sought from Lord Narayana alone. That which ensures that one gets everything and more that they ask for from Lord Narayana is Daya Devi. Not only does She enable the granting of the first three puruShArthAs but also plays a key role in granting the parama puruShArtha of moksham. Common people like us are incapable of the rigors of karma yogam, j~nAna yogam and bhakti yogam due to the onerous requirements called for in their prescribed upasanas for gaining moksham. Therefore, the path of



tvadu daya tUlikAbhiramunA vR^iShashaila juShA sthira chara shilpinaiva parikalpita chitra dhiyaH

Saranagati (unconditional, total surrender to Lord Narayana's feet) is most appropriate for us and is recognized to be superior to the prescriptions of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga, in that it caters to those who are utterly incapable of adopting these upasanas due to lack of knowledge, strength, or both in order to adopt their prescriptions. In the Devanayaka PancAshat salutation "nArhanti tasya shatakoTi tamAmshuakakShyAm" Svami Desikan declares that the glory of the bhakti yogi (one who has adopted the means prescribed by karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga) does not equate to one part in a ten million to the glory of one who has adopted the means of surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Devanayaka. This is due to the fact that this path of unconditional, total surrender has been revealed to us by geniuses such as Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar.

Svami Desikan is known as kavi-tArkika-simham. In this verse he exhibits his poetic skills by describing the contributions of Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar through an alankaram (decoration). Specifically, Lord Srinivasa is described in terms of a master artisan. In this context, Daya Devi functions as His paint brush. The picture that is painted by Daya Devi is that of the arrival of Acharyas such as SvAmi Bhashyakarar, Svami Alavandar, and Svami Nathamuni. Out of sheer humility and respect for purvacharyas, Svami Desikan refrains from including himself in the glorification of the Acharya paramparai emanating from Daya Devi. However, as far as we are concerned it is most appropriate to include Svami Desikan alongside his venerable



purvacharyas, with utmost respect and gratitude. Upon beholding the picture, the first question that arises is: "What is the inherent message conveyed by the picture?" The underlying message upon beholding this picture drawn by the paint-brush known as Daya Devi, is that of unconditional, total surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa. This message is beautifully conveyed by Svami Desikan in this verse. The salutation "tvadu daya tUlikAbhiramunA vR^iShashaila juShA" has the import "Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa has taken root at the Venkatam hill out of an intense desire to redeem errant baddha jivans on this earth." The tribute "amunA vR^iShashaila juShA" reflects the fact that Lord Srinivasa is the one that engages in the sport of creating the entire universe. The tribute "sthira chara shilpinaiva parikalpita chitra dhiyaH" captures the fact that Lord Srinivasa, who is a master artisan engages in the task of creating the entire universe replete with animate and inanimate objects.

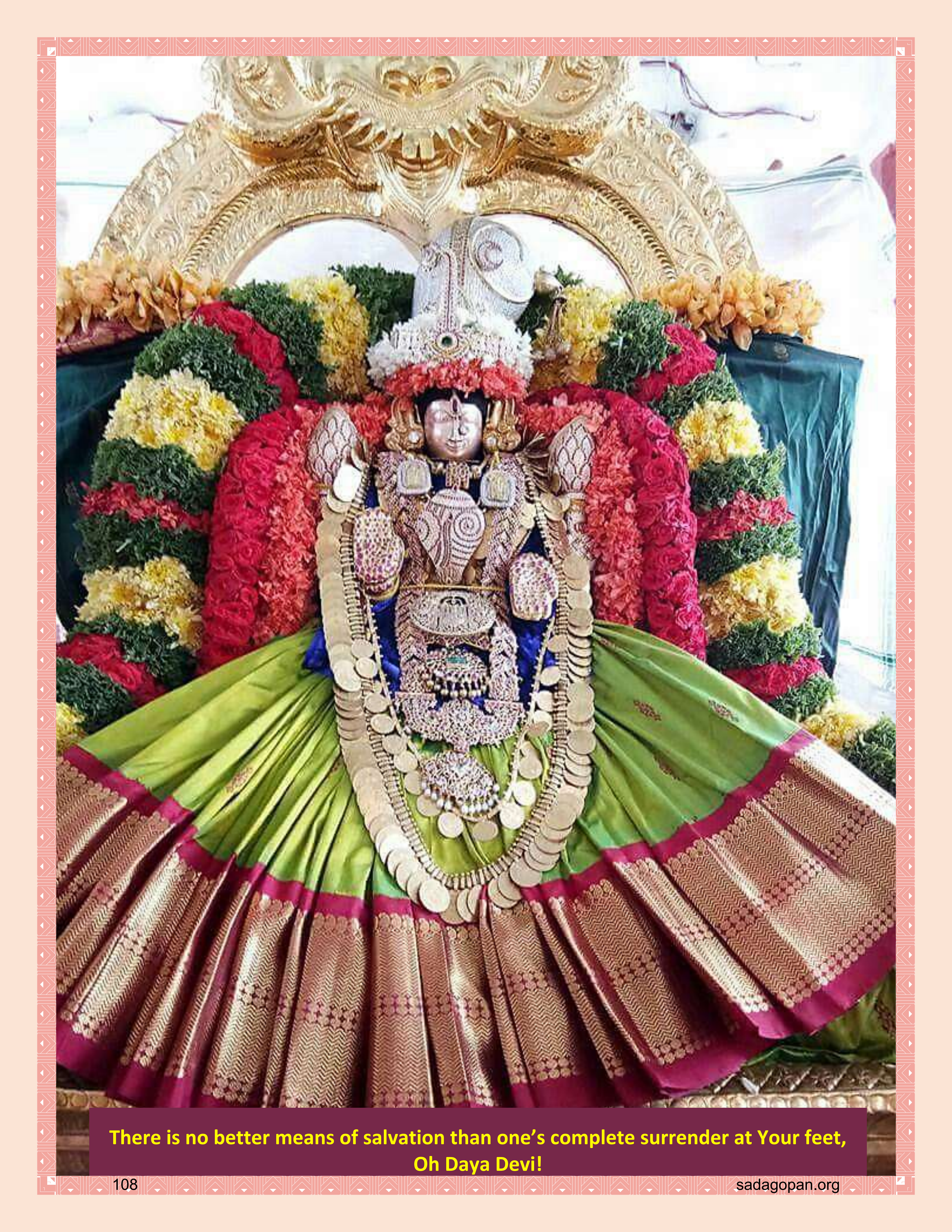
In keeping with the Taittriya Upanishad glorification "yato vacho nivartante aprApya manasA saH", the glory of the Lord is so vast and immeasurable that it cannot be captured by words. The mind cannot comprehend His uncountably infinite auspicious qualities. The Taittriya Upanishad further declares "yato vA imAni bhUtAni jAyante yena jAtAni jIvanti yatprayantyabhisaMvishanti tadvijij~nAsasva tadbrahmeti" to highlight the fact that Brahman needs to be understood as the one who creates the universe, engages in its sustenance, and finally holds the universe in its subtle state during praLayam or deluge which destroys the entire universe. From this it needs to be understood that it is Lord Narayana alone that is responsible for the creation of the universe. A commonly held perception is that the four-faced (Chaturmukha) Brahma is responsible for creation of the universe. This needs to be understood in the context of Lord Narayana being the genesis of Brahma. Furthermore, by way of anupravesham (entering the Atma) of Brahma, and inducing him to undertake the task of creation, Lord Narayana is instrumental for the creation of the entire universe. A comprehensive discussion of this subject can be found in the SriBhashyam, where Svami Bhashyakarar examines the Upanishadic statement pertaining to the creation of the universe and posits the question whether Lord Narayana is the direct cause (pratyakSha kAraNam) or indirect cause (parampara kAraNam) for the universe and through convincing arguments based on pramANams (valid sources of knowledge) establishes that Lord Narayana is the direct cause for the creation of the universe. The tribute from this verse "amunA vR^iShashaila juShA sthira chara shilpinaiva" reflects the fact that when an artisan creates a picture containing animate and inanimate objects, it must be a realistic rendition. In other words, if



an ocean is depicted in a picture, the massive waves of the ocean lashing the shores must come through clearly almost like a 3-D instantiation. In the context of this verse, the task of creation is a sport engaged in by Lord Srinivasa using a paint brush (tUlika). The YadhavAbhyudayam tribute "krIDA tUlikaya svasminkR^ipArUShitayA svayam ekovishvamidaM citraM vibhuH shrImAnajIjanat" reflects the fact that the entire act of creation of the universe is a sport for Lord Narayana engaged in by using a paint-brush. Unlike the krIDa tUlika used by Lord Narayana for creating the entire universe, the creation of Acharyas such as Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar, came about on account of Lord Srinivasa's Divine paint-brush, Daya Devi. The common paint-brush used by Lord Narayana when engaged in the task of creation of the universe must be capable of depicting fixed (inanimate) objects and moving (animate) objects in the manner of the ocean whose fixed nature is reflected through its vast expanse and depth while moving objects are reflected through the creation and dissipation of the waves therein. Lord Srinivasa out of His intense desire to grace the nitya sUris in SrivaikuNTham (fixed objects) and baddha jivans (objects that come and go) arrived at the Venkatam hill on His own accord. This is reflective of Sri TiuppAnAzhvar's AmalanAtipirAn salutation "mantipAi vaDavEnkaTamAmalai vAnavarkal canti ceyya ninRAn". This is also evidenced in Svami Desikan's Rahasyatrayasaram tribute "ViNNavaraum maNNavarum virumbum verpu". This Srinivasa, who is never separated from Sri, engages in the act of creation of the universe. Thus, Thayar too is an integral part in the act of creation. The krIDA tUlikai in this context is one which takes into account the puNyas and pApas of each jivan, the order in which these karmas need to be endured to arrive at the task of creation, which gives specific forms and shapes to

each being. The paint brush known as Daya Devi reflects the innermost intent of Lord Srinivasa's mind, namely redeeming errant baddha jivans, who are caught up in a seemingly interminable cycle of births and deaths, with no hope of redemption. Therefore, this paint brush is an udaya tUlika. It is the tUlika exuding the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. The use of bahuvachanam (tUlikAbhiH) to describe the Daya Devi paint brush of Lord Srinivasa is intended to capture the fact that the paint brush never ceases painting until the artisan is satisfied. The inner meaning of this tribute is that the waves of Daya Devi continue to crest until Lord Srinivasa is satisfied.

The tribute "sUryA candramasau dhAta yathAa pUrvaM akalpayat" (Rig Veda 10-190) reflects the fact that Lord Narayana engages in the task of srushti after praLayam and creates Surya, Chandra and others in the manner that has been pre-determined and looks identical to how they were before the onset of praLayam. They also perform their assigned functions (Sun rising in the East and setting in the West, while the Moon appears at night and sets at the arrival of dawn) identical to that before praLayam. This act of srushti is the Lord's kalpanam, namely arising from His intention. In a like fashion, the kalpanam of Lord Srinivasa, on account of the Daya Devi paint brush gives rise to a "citradhiyaH", namely the task of redeeming cetanas (errant baddha jivans who are bound to samsara on account of karma accumulated since beginningless time). The "citradhiyaH" comes about in the form of "yatipati yAmuna prabhR^itayaH" that is the avataram of Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar. When it comes to Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Desikan expresses his reverence through the salutation "pathyassamyaminAm praNamya charaNoU tat pAda koTirayoH sambandhena samidhyamAna vibhavAn dhanyAsthadhanyAn guroH" to reflect that the fact that the truly fortunate ones are those who have sought and attained refuge at the feet of Svami Bhashyakarar. These fortunate ones shine brightly. Svami Desikan glorifies Svami Alavandar through the tribute "bahubhirupacitam yAmunaiH prabandhaiH trAtaM samyak yatIndhraIH idamakhila tamaH karshanaM darshanaM naH" to attest to the fact that the Srivaishnava tradition that was propounded by Svami Alavandar was exposited upon by Svami Bhashyakarar and handed down to us as a treasure. Upon beholding the pictures of Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar arising from the Daya Devi paint brush, it conveys the message of "jagati hitaM na nastvayi bharanyasanAdadhikam". That is Svami Alavandar and Svami Bhashyakarar have unambiguously established that for the upliftment of the entire universe there is nothing greater than the path of unconditional, total surrender to the lotus feet of Daya Devi. This is the prelude to Svami Desikan's formal surrender to Daya Devi that is contained in the next verse. Prior to performing the Bharasamarpanam it is



There is no better means of salvation than one's complete surrender at Your feet, Oh Daya Devi!

customary to salute one's Acharyas. Accordingly, Svami Desikan traverses the path laid down by his pUrvacharayas. The instruction herein for us is that we need to perform unconditional total surrender to the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa through the grace of our Acharyas and attain the status of SaraNagatas, who behave in the manner of the Chataka bird as expounded upon in the previous verse. They discard the benefits accorded by devatantaras and resort to the Lord Srinivasa's lotus feet as their sole refuge to derive lasting bliss. Therefore, we need to exhibit eternal gratitude to Svami Desikan for revealing this esoteric truth to us. In fact, it would be sufficient to seek Svami Desikan's lotus feet as our sole refuge since his acceptance of us ensures the acceptance of us by his pUrvacharyas and hence by Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"This is the penultimate verse of the sixth decad, where SVami Desikan pays homage to the great expositors of the doctrine of Prapatti. Though SVami Desikan specifically mentions Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Alavandar, while providing a general reference to other Acharyas, it must be remembered that Svami NammAzhvar played a fundamental role as the prapanna jana santAna kUTasthar (progenitor so to speak of the clan of Saranagatas to Lord Narayana), who proposed the unmistakable thesis that one can attain the bliss of eternal residence in Sri Vaikuntam by Prapatti alone. Furthermore, he instructed Svami Nathamuni Acharya in the holy collect (Divya Prabandham) solely for our edification. To pay homage to such great promoters of the Prapatti path, Svami Desikan weaves a lovely verse with artistic majesty. Svami Desikan declares herein "Oh Daya Devi of the Lord of Vrishadri! Look what the Lord has done for us! He is an expert artist. He used incipient Daya flow as His paint brush and carved imaginative, effective, intellectual features in great savants like Svami Bhashyakarar, and Svami Alavandar. What is the import of these intellectual manifestations having been shaped with His Design and His motivation? It is exactly this: Those great geniuses proved and proclaimed to the world at large that there is no better means of salvation than one's complete surrender at Your feet, Oh Daya Devi!"



Slokam 60

मृदु हृदये दये मृदित काम हिते महिते

धृत विबुधे बुधेषु विततात्मधुरे मधुरे ।

वृषगिरि सार्वभौम दयिते मयि ते महतीं

भवुक निधे निधेहि भवमूल हरां लहरीम् ॥ ६० ॥

mR^idu hR^idaye daye mR^idita kAma hite mahite

dhR^ita vibudhe budheShu vitatAtmadhure madhure|

vR^iShagiri sArvabhauma dayite mayi te mahatIM

bhavuka nidhe nidhehi bhavamUla harAM laharIm||60



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now elaborate on verse 60 where Svami Desikan performs his formal surrender to Daya Devi in the same manner as Svami NammaAzhvar performed Saranagati to Lord Srinivasa in the sixth decad of Tiruvaimozhi. The previous verse "tvadu daya tUlikAbhiramunA" described Lord Srinivasa as a master artisan, whose paint brush was Daya Devi. The picture emanating from Daya Devi is that of venerable Acharyas such as Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Alavandar, and Svami Nathamuni. The underlying message conveyed by this picture is that for the upliftment of the entire universe, there is no path greater than that of unconditional total surrender to the feet of Daya Devi. Namely, Saranagati for the Daya Gunam of Lord Srinivasa is advocated in this verse. It must also be remembered that when a suitable form is assigned to the Daya Gunam, it is none other than Thayar-Mahalakshmi. Therefore, it needs to be understood here that the Saranagati advocated in verse 59 is for Thayar. The surrender cannot be accomplished without the help of an Acharya. To illustrate this fact, the previous verse glorified the contributions of Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Alavandar, and Acharyas before them in verse 59. This sets the stage for Svami Desikan to perform his formal Saranagati to the lotus feet of Daya Devi. Adiyen is expositing on this verse on the special day of Bhishma Ekadasi. This is a Bhagyam that arises in a totally unplanned manner, much in the same fashion as it turned out when Andal

began her delivery of the Tiruppavai verses on a PourNami day in the month of margazhi described in the salutation "matinirainta nannALAl". It is only the manas (pure mind) of Bhagavatas that inspired adiyen to undertake this task that is responsible for this wonderful coincidence of delivering this verse on Bhishma Ekadasi day.

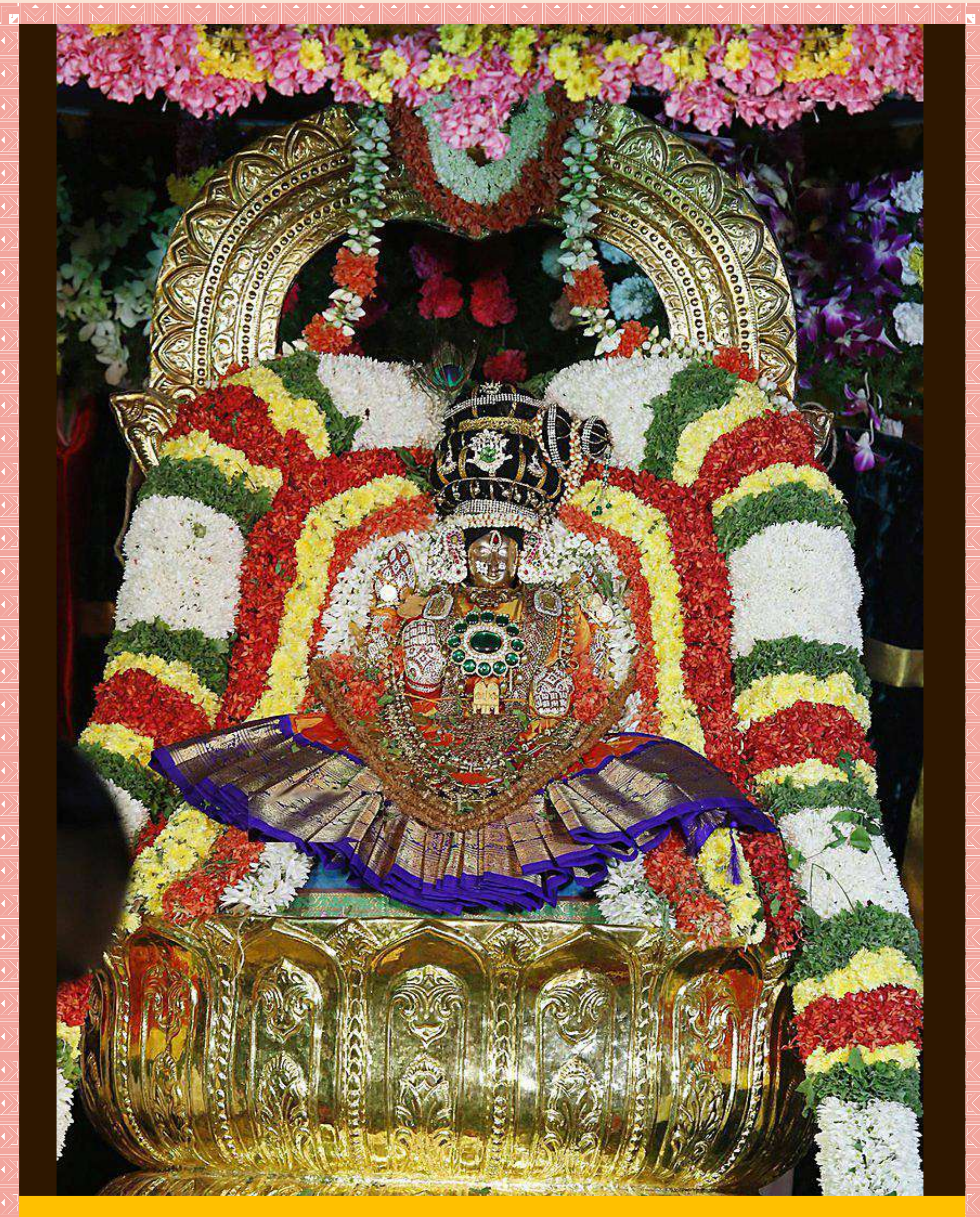


Lord Srinivasa is the master artisan, whose paint brush is Daya Devi and the picture emanating from Daya Devi is that of venerable Acharyas!

Since this verse exposits on Svami Desikan's Saranagati to Daya Devi, we shall first provide some background on Bharanyasam and then examine the import of this verse in that context. Bharanyasam is the act of submitting the Atma at the feet of Lord Narayana to ensure its protection. Until this time we have been filled with deluded thinking that the sariram (body) is the Atma (soul) or that the Atma is separate from the sariram but exists independently and performs all actions as per its will. However, this Atma does not belong to us but is undisputably the property of Lord Narayana. cauryam is the act of stealing. In this context, the act of stealing is that of viewing someone else's property as one's own-specifically, thinking of the Atma as one's own property rather than that which belongs to Lord Narayana. For example, if one uses someone else's wealth to satisfy one's own

urges with total disregard to the fact that the wealth is not one's own, it is an act of stealing. In the present instance, viewing the Atma, which is the property of Lord Narayana, as one's own belonging, and furthermore putting it to inappropriate use under the deluded thinking of the Atma being independent constitutes highway robbery. The act of ordinary stealing incurs punishment that is in keeping with the severity of the offence. However, in this case the theft of the Atma is so severe, that it becomes impossible to even contemplate on the extreme punishment that is meted out for the offence. So far, this is the offence that we have egregiously committed and mistakenly believed the property of Lord Narayana to be our own and put it to inappropriate use. However, now due to the grace of the most compassionate Acharyas, we have come to realize that this Atma does not belong to us. Instead, it is the sole property of Lord Narayana, who serves as the master, controller, and supporter for the Atma. Only when one identifies an object as one's own does one engage in the activity of safeguarding the object. However, when the realization sets in that the object does not belong to them, they cease in their efforts to safeguard the object. For example, as long as one has control over wealth, they expend it carefully and make all attempts to protect it. However, when they realize that the wealth does not belong to them, and hand it over to the rightful owner, they bear no responsibility for protecting it anymore. In keeping with this doctrine, the Atma is unequivocally the property of Lord Narayana. Once, the Atma is restored to its rightful owner, it becomes His responsibility for protecting. The individual no longer needs to worry about protecting the Atma. The fruits arising from the protection of the Atma no longer belong to the individual. Instead, it is accrued by the rightful owner, Lord Narayana.

Therefore, submitting the responsibility of protection of the Atma along with the allied fruits arising from the act of protection to Lord Narayana, is the act of Bharasamarpanam. This is described by Svami Desikan in the Nyasa Dasakam verse: "ahaM madrakShaNa bharo madrakShaNa phalaM tathA na mama shrIpaterevetyAtmAnaM nikShipet budhaH" to denote the fact that the Atma does not belong to him nor does the responsibility of its protection or the attendant fruits arising from the action of protecting the Atma belong to him. Instead, this becomes the sole prerogative of Lord Narayana, eternally associated with Sri as His consort. In this case, since the Saranagati is being performed to Daya Devi, the responsibility of protection and the attendant fruits arising from the action of protection are dedicated to Lord Srinivasa. There are two modes of Saranagati for the process outlined in the Nyasa Dasakam verse. The first is adhvAraka prapatti. The other is sadhvAraka prapatti. There are two ways of attaining Lord Narayana.



ahaM madrakShaNa bharo madrakShaNa phalaM tathA na mama shrIpaterevetyAtmAnaM nikShipet budhaH

One is through bhakti yogam while the other is through saranagati. Bhakti yogam is not suited for all due to its onerous requirements of knowledge, strength, and credentials of the practitioner. The path of Saranagati is meant for those who are unfit to adopt Bhakti yogam. Sages Vasishta and Vyasa were eligible to undertake the rigors of Bhakti yogam since they are endowed with the svarUpa yogyatai (fitness due to credentials) and possess the requisite knowledge and strength to adopt the arduous practices of Bhakti yogam. However, for common people like us who neither possess the required svarupa yogyatai, or the requisite knowledge and strength to undertake the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam, the only open path is that of Saranagati. Even the Bhakti yogam practitioners perform a prapatti for the purpose of successful completion of their Bhakti yoga upasana and attain moksham at the completion of Bhakti yogam. This is known as sadhvAraka prapatti, wherein the surrender becomes a necessary accessory for Bhakti Yogam. The second is adhvAraka prapatti, which is resorted to by those who are totally incapable (akincanas) who perform Prapatti with the sole aim of begetting moksham. In this context, the Prapanna submits a prayer to Lord Narayana, expressing his inability to conform to the prescriptions of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga. Instead, he requests Lord Narayana to stand in place of these prescriptions and seeks the same boon of moksham that results for bhakti yogam practitioners. This is also known as svatantara prapatti. Then comes the question of how Bhakti Yogam and Prapatti operate. In a nutshell, they confer what is sought by a supplicant. In keeping with the Bhagavadgita statement "caturvidA bhajante mAm" the four purushArthAs of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha can be obtained as a result of performing either Bhakti Yogam or Prapatti. Thus, it has been established that there are two paths to attaining Lord Narayana, namely, Bhakti yogam and Prapatti. Further, it has been expounded upon that the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam are quite demanding, while Saranagati is simpler. Additionally, it has been pointed out that Prapatti is necessarily performed even by the practitioner of Bhakti yogam for successful completion of the upasana of Bhakti yogam upon which moksham is obtained. Svami Desikan declares "prapannAd anyesham na dishati mukundaH nija padam" to reflect the fact that it is impossible to attain Lord Narayana's feet unless one adopts either Bhakti yogam or Prapatti. Additionally, it becomes evident that Prapatti is an essential accessory for Bhakti yogam. Svami Desikan further elaborates on the greatness of Prapatti over Bhakti yogam. In the DevanAyaka PancAshat tribute: "ye janmakoTibhirupArjita shuddha dharmAH teShaM bhavaccaraNa bhaktiratIva bhogyA tvajjIvitaIstridashanAyaka durlabhaIstaiH AtmAnamapya kathayaH svayamAtmavantam."



Adiyen submits the task of protecting me to Your feet

Svami Desikan emphasizes the fact the Lord becomes the "jIvitaIH", the very object of their existence. Here it may be helpful to recall Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi tribute "uNNum cOrum parukum nIrum tinnum veRRilaiyum" to reflect the fact the Lord is the Bhogam and BhogopakaraNam for these beings. The path adopted by these mahans is outlined in the DevanAyaka PachAshat verse quoted above. They have taken millions of births (not a day or two) to attain this state as reflected by the tribute "ye janmakoTibhirupArjita shuddha dharmAH". "Due to the anushtanams and austerities practiced over these many births, these mahans have been blessed with the bhagyam of singular Bhakti towards You, Oh Devanayaka!" declares Svami Desikan. "For these mahans, Bhakti for Your feet, Oh Devanayaka! becomes an extremely delectable offering. You too are pleased with this act on their part." This verse thus highlights the glory of the Bhakti yogam practitioner. In the next verse of the Devanayaka Panchasat, Svami Desikan pays tribute to those adopt the means of SaraNagati since they are incapable of the arduous demands of Bhakti yogam. This verse is: "niShkincanatva dhaninA vibudhesha yena nyastaH sva rakshaNabharastava pAda padme nAnavidha prathita yoga visheSha dhanyAH nArhanti tasya shatakoTi tamAmshakakShyAm". In this verse, Svami Desikan describes his own state. However, it is in reality a reflection of our state. Svami Desikan states specifically "I have not accumulated the benefit of austerities over millions of births to develop singular Bhakti for You, Lord Devanayaka! However, I too possess great wealth - my utter lack of ability to pursue anything like the mahans described previously. Therefore, I am totally incapable of adopting the prescriptions of Karma yogam, j~nAna yogam, or Bhakti yogam as the means for attaining You - as outlined in the salutation niShkincanatva dhaninA. Therefore, I completely submit the task of protecting me to Your feet." Next comes a comparison between those who have adopted the upasanam of Bhakti yogam and upon attaining sakShAtkAram

(experienced direct presence of the Lord) derived bliss and the Saranagata who is incapable of doing this but directly resorts to the Lord's feet for protection. Svami Desikan affirms that if such a comparison is undertaken, the Bhakti yogi's greatness does not equate to a part of a billion with respect to the Saranagata. This is due to the fact that Bhakti yogam is the privy of a select few capable ones, whereas the mode of Saranagati is common for all. Thus, when one who is incapable of adopting Bhakti yogam gets an urge to seek moksham and submits his appeal of total helplessness to pursue the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam, and instead places the burden of protection of his Atma at the feet of Lord Narayana, moksham is assured. This mode of Saranagati is known as svatantara Prapatti and has five important accessories known as "angas" (limbs). These angas are anukUlasya sankalpam (acting in a manner that is pleasing to Lord Narayana), pratikUlasya varjanam (avoiding everything that displeases Lord Narayana), karpaNyam (a state of utter helplessness), mahAvishvAsam (unshakaable faith that Lord Narayana will protect at all times and under all circumstances), and goptrutva varaNam (No other recourse for refuge besides Lord Narayana). The first, anukUlasya sankalpam is examined in the context of Vibhishana saranagati. He had resolved to act in a way that is pleasing to Lord Rama as evidenced by his advice to Ravana in the latter's court "pradIyatAm dAsharathAya maithilI" (Oh Ravana! Do not proceed on the path of sin. Instead restore Sita to Lord Rama). Next comes pratikUlasya varjanam, namely refraining from acts that incur the displeasure of Lord Narayana. In this regard the Vibhishana saranagati is again instructive when examining Vibhishana's statement "parityaktA mayA lanka mitrANi ca dhanAni ca." (I have given up everything in Lanka including my family, wealth, and friends and instead sought refuge at the feet of Lord Rama.) Then follows the angam of KarpaNyam - a state of utter helplessness which precludes one from protecting oneself and that the jivan has no other means for this purpose except resorting to Lord Narayana. ananyagatitvam denotes the state of being where the jivan has no other recourse besides Lord Narayana. Akincanyam is the state where the jivan is totally incapable of adopting the means of Karma yogam, j~nAna yogam and Bhakti yogam. This is again illustrated in the context of Vibhishana saranagati through his confession before Lord Rama "anujo rAvaNasya aham tena ca asmi avamAnitaH" (I am the younger brother of Ravana. I have been insulted by him. I am incapable of protecting myself and therefore, I completely submit this burden of my protection to Lord Rama). The angam of Mahavishvasam is then examined.

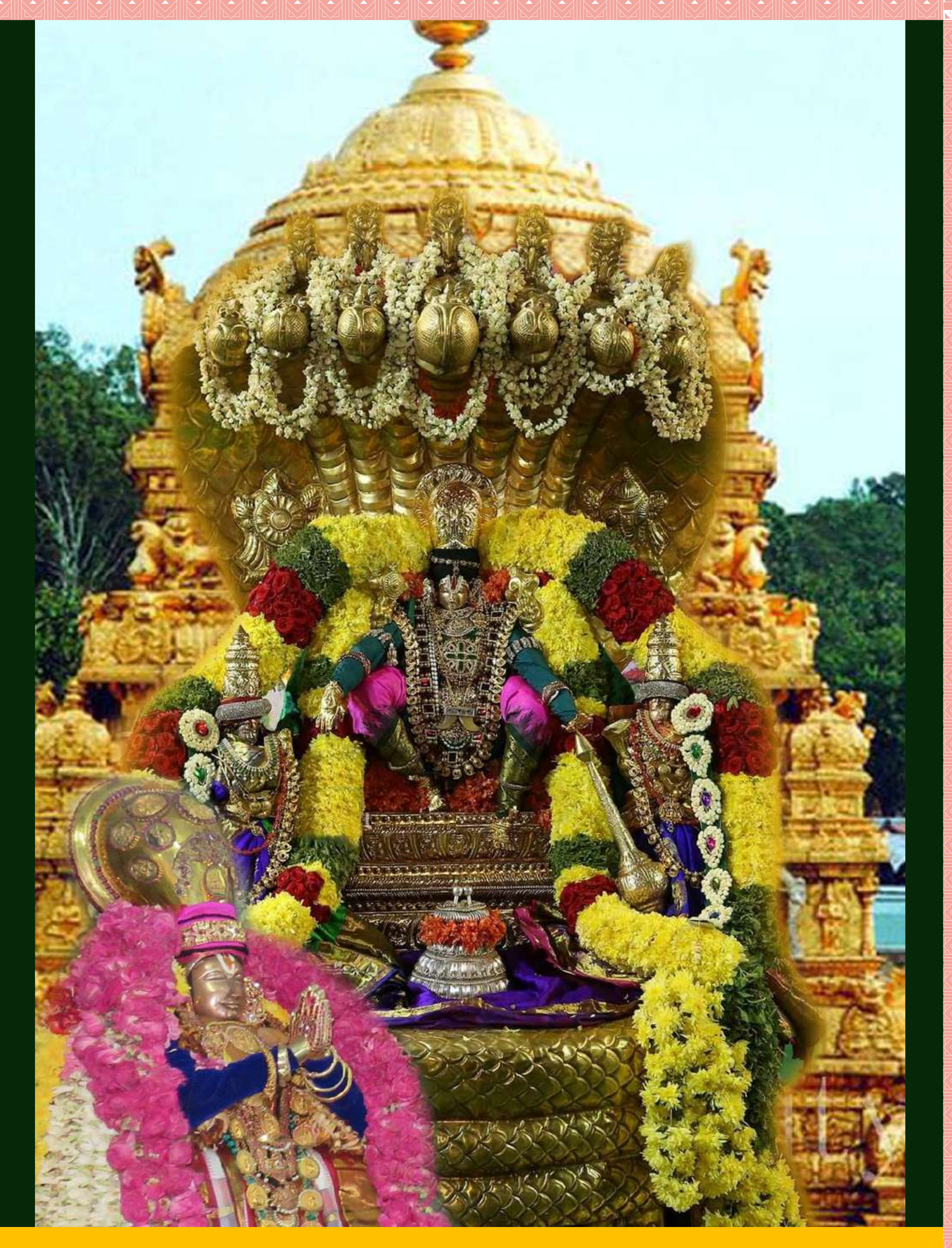

nirupAdhika vAtsalyam

This is the unshakable faith exhibited by the jivan in Lord Narayana. Namely, when the burden of protection of the jivan is submitted to the feet of Lord Narayana, He will definitely protect the jivan come what may. This is illustrated through Vibhishana's appeal for Saranagati through the tribute "sarvaloka sharaNyAya rAghavAya mahAtmane" (Please inform Lord Rama, the refuge of the entire universe of the arrival of Vibhishana, who submits this appeal for protection). Lord Rama offers refuge to all seekers regardless of caste, creed, gender, affiliation, status as wealthy or poor, learned or illiterate and makes no distinction of whether the jivan belongs to animal or human species. He does so with equanimity and no discrimination whatsoever and graces all seekers desiring moksham equally. Next comes the angam of goptrutva varaNam. Vibhishana's statement of "nivedhayitumAm kShipram vibhIshaNamupastitham" becomes relevant. With all the other angas in place, if one does not submit the appeal to Lord Narayana for protection, the Saranagati becomes incomplete. Thus, a prayer for protection is required. This is reflected in the tribute "nivedhayitumAm kShipram vibhIshaNamupastitham". Thus, we summarized in a nutshell the essential aspects of Vibhishana Saranagati covered in great detail by Svami Desikan in the kalakshepa grantham Abhaya pradhAna sAram.

This sets the stage for Svami Desikan to perform his formal surrender to Daya Devi. Here, it must be noted that Daya Devi is a female due to being the consort of Lord Srinivasa. She is glorified in YatirAja Saptati salutation "nityam aj~nAta nigrahAm" namely, one in whose dictionary there is no word called nigraham (punishment). In this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan performs a formal surrender to Daya Devi of such loftiness. This verse is "mR^idu hR^idaye daye mR^idita kAma hite mahite dhR^ita vibudhe budheShu vitatAtmadhure madhure vR^iShagiri sArvabhauma dayite mayi te mahatIM bhavuka nidhe nidhehi bhavamUla harAM laharIm." There are numerous sambodhanams (call out) for Daya Devi in this verse. The previous verses contain at most one sambodhanam. However, this verse is replete with usages of mR^idu hR^idaye, daye mR^idita kAma hite, mahite, dhR^ita vibudhe, budhe, vR^iShagiri sArvabhauma dayite. The salutation "mR^idu hR^idaye" is examined first. When one performs Saranagati, the person to whom Saranagati is performed should possess "sharaNya upayuktamAna gUnam" namely the qualities befitting their stature as the protector, that can offer refuge. Svami Desikan elaborates upon this concept in the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. Specifically, one who is offering refuge must be capable of protecting the supplicant upon receiving his appeal for protection. This

calls for a few salient qualities on the part of the protector, which entitles them to this status. These qualities are Daya, Vatsalyam, Saulabhyam, Svamitvam, Satya Sankalpam, Satya Karmatvam. Foremost among them are Daya and Vatsalyam. Vatsalyam comes to the fore in the tribute "mR^idu hR^idaye" denoting the fact that Daya Devi is endowed with an extremely kind/soft heart. Here it must be noted that even though the supplicant has committed grave sins, Daya Devi out of Her kind-hearted disposition towards them ignores their sins and instead is only focused on redeeming them for upliftment. This is the "nirupAdhika vAtsalyam" (absolute affection in the manner of a cow for its calf totally ignoring the faults). For example, a child that has committed numerous forbidden acts arrives by the side of the child's mother. There is ample testimony to the child's misdeeds. However, instead of punishing the child for these misdeeds, the mother has a singular focus on how to redeem this errant child. This is denoted by "nirupAdhika vAtsalyam" This mirrors the disposition of Lord Narayana towards Saranagatas. The kind/soft hearted nature of Daya Devi is highlighted in the Ramayanam tribute "mitra bhAvena samprAptam na tyajeyam kathancana doSho yadi api tasya syAt satAm etad agarhitam". In this statement, Lord Rama declares that "even if the supplicant has numerous faults, these need to be ignored and he must be graced." This is the import of the salutation "mR^idu hR^idaye". Svami Desikan elaborates upon the term "mR^idu" as "saparAdaIrapi sahasA Ashrayitum shaktaH" that is even if one has sinned greatly, gracing them while being totally oblivious to these sins is the trait characterized by "mR^idu". For example, if an individual A has committed numerous apacharams towards another individual B and then approaches the latter for some favor one fine day, it is only natural for the latter to feel "I have been grievously wronged by individual A. Now that he needs my help, he is seeking to be friendly towards me. What incentive do I have to help him?" However, instead of thinking thus, if the latter resolves "He has sought me out at least now. Let me help him to the extent possible." This is the disposition of Mrudhu hrudayas according to Svami Desikan. One can see this come through in Sita Devi's advice to Ravana, when he made the most inappropriate request to Her to come to his inner apartments. This is reflected in the Ramayanam salutation "mitramaupayikaM kartuM rAmaH sthAnaM parIpsatA tena maitrI bhavatu te yadi jivitumicChasi" The import of this tribute is that Lord Rama is extremely gentle and kind-hearted towards those who seek refuge in Him through the mode of Saranagati. Therefore, Sita Devi advises Ravana "if you desire your wellbeing try to exhibit a friendly disposition towards Lord Rama." It must be noted that Ravana had sinned without limit. However, despite his grave apacharams, Sita Devi only

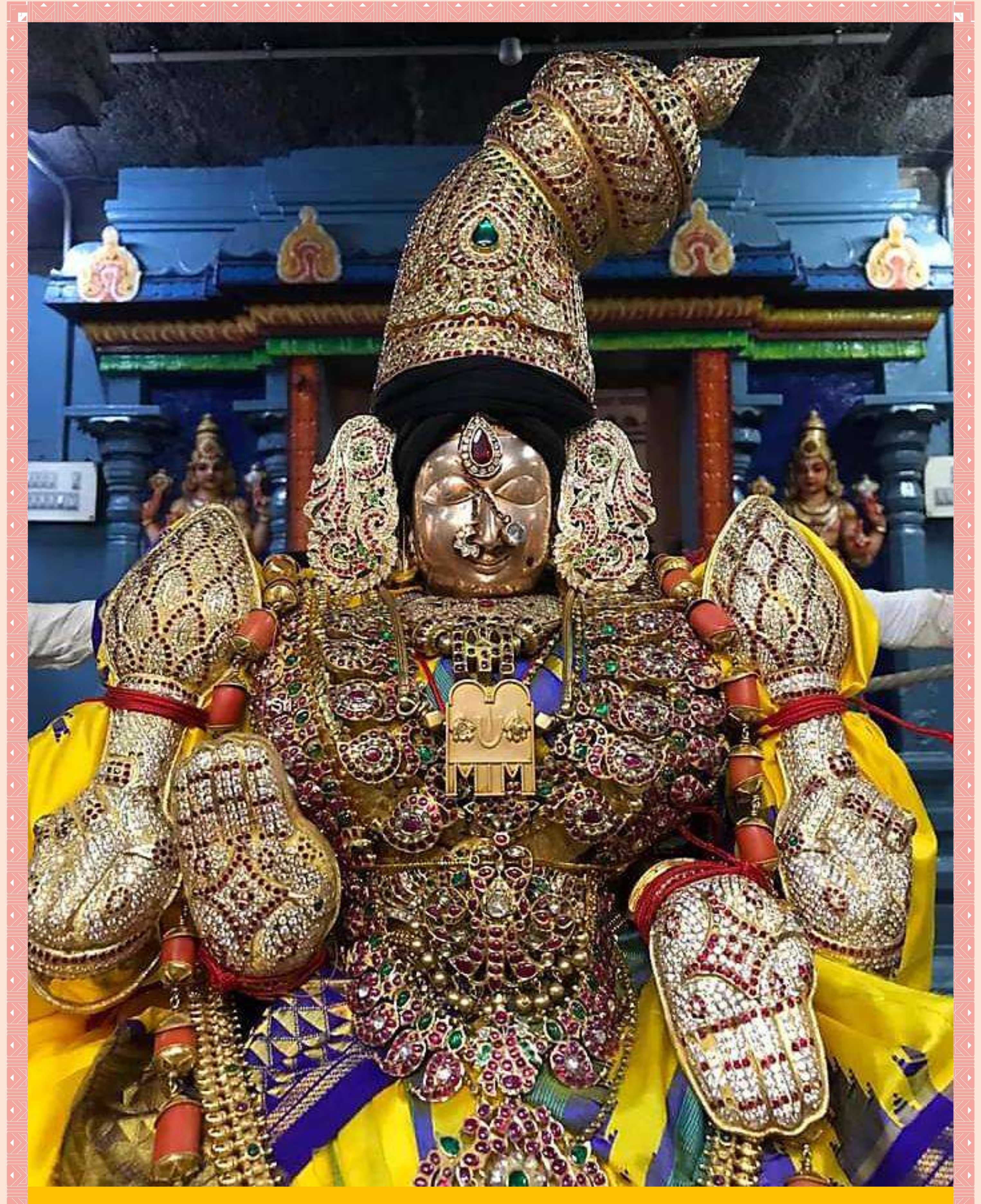
had his wellbeing in mind and advised him appropriately. Again, Sita Devi's Vatsalyam for Ravana comes to the fore. In this context, it must also be remembered that Lord Narayana alone exhibits "nirupAdhika vAtsalyam" (absolute and total unconditional affection in the manner of a cow for its calf) towards all supplicants. We too may possess vatsalyam. However, it would only be for our own children. Other children may not be privy to the same affection. Whereas, when it comes to Lord Narayana, He exhibits an identical disposition of unconditional affection for all His supplicants. This is a characteristic shared by Daya Devi. Next the salutation "mR^idita kAma hite mahite" is elaborated upon. The import of this tribute is that Daya Devi graces those who have conquered their desires. Everyone has desires. However, those who do not give into sensual desires but instead steer these desires for a good objective, become mrudita kAmas. Tiruvarangattu AmutanAr declares in RAmAnusa nURRantAti "KaNNanukkE Amatu kAmam aRam poruL vIDitaRkenRu" to reflect the fact that it is good to have desires. However, these desires must be exclusively for Krishna anubhavam. This denotes the state of mrudita kAma. For example, one may earn money to ensure the care and feed of one's family. Two things that becomes relevant in this instance are how much wealth can be earned and how much is sufficient? On the other hand, if one earns money with the objective of caring for needy Bhagavatas, this denotes the state of mrudita kAma hite. Even to this day there are some people who set aside a portion of their earnings to for supporting noble causes (Dharma kAryam). No matter how serious the money crunch, they will not tap into this funding to tide over the circumstance. These are the mrudita kamas glorified in the Daya Satakam tribute. The Taittriya Upanishad declares "shrOtriyasya cAkamahatasya". This is a glorification of one, who is a BrahmaniShTa (knowledgable about Brahman and follows the sastras, without being affected by wrong desires). Namely, this describes the greatness of those who have conquered their desires instead of subjugating themselves to these desires. This is reflected in the tribute "mrudita kAma". One of such disposition is graced beyond measure by Daya Devi. This can be seen from Vibhishana's declaration "parityaktA mayA lanka mitrANi ca dhanAni ca". This highlights the fact that Vibhishana gave up all his possessions in order to come to Lord Rama denoting the fact that he had conquered his desires and was therefore a mrudita kama. Lord Rama recognized this and exuded affection for Vibhishana. There is yet another class of beings who lament "adhano ayaM dhanaM prApya mAdyannucchaiH na mAM smaret iti kAruNikaH nUnaM dhanam me bhUri nAdadAt" (Why has the Lord not blessed me with wealth? Am I not qualified? Am I not competent? I went to the same gurukulam as another wealthy one and learnt



SvAmi Desikan performs his prapatti to Tiruvenkatamudaiyan

the scriptures in the proper manner from the same preceptor as him. However, he is endowed with great wealth, while I am languishing.) This is the statement from Sudama as he reflects on why he is in poverty. Most common folk would compare themselves to wealthier folks and lament that "I was a top student, while this individual failed many times. However, today he has great wealth whereas I am struggling" However, Sudama offers a profound reason for his state of abject poverty through his statement that "If one who has not had wealth before, suddenly becomes rich, he will stop contemplating on the Lord, who made him rich. Therefore, the Lord has chosen me to remain poor out of his extreme compassion." This Sudama is mrudita kAma. Lord Krishna served as "mR^idita kAma hite". That is Lord Krishna acted for the wellbeing of Sudama, who was mrudita kAma. Lord Krishna Himself declares "yasyAM anugrahaM icChami dhanaM tasyAM harAmyaham" (Those who I decide to grace, I first take away their wealth. However, they need not have any regret, since My complete grace falls upon them.) Daya Devi too acts in the same manner and ensures the upliftment of "mrudita kAma" as described in the tribute "mR^idita kAma hite". The next tribute from the Daya Satakaam verse is "mahite", which denotes the fact that Daya Devi is extolled by all due to Her disposition of "mrudita kAma hite". Svami NammAzhvar echoes this sentiment his Tiruvaimozhi tribute "nikaril pukazhAi". Svami NammAzhvar performs his formal Saranagati to Lord Srinivasa in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram 6.10 "akala illEn irayum enRu alarmElmankai uraimArbA nikaril pukazhAi ulakamUnRuDayAi yennai AzhvAne nikaril amarar muni kaNankaL virumpum tiruvEnkaDattAnE pukazh onRillA aDiyEn, un aDiklzh amarntu pukuntEnE" The purushakAratvam (mediatrix) of Thayar is a pre-requisite for performing Saranagati. Svami NammAzhvar's tribute first glorifies Thayar, who is never separated from Lord Srinivasa. Next it highlights the fact that Thayar serves as the intermediary for all jivans that resort to Lord Srinivasa through SharaNagati. She intercedes on their behalf, conveys their appeal of utter helplessness and ensures that they secure the Lord's grace for their upliftment. The tribute "nikaril pukazhAi" reflects the fact that Thayar's glory is matchless. No one else in the universe possesses glory that is equal to or greater than that of the most compassionate Thayar. saushIlyam and saulabhyam become important attributes in this context. This is illustrated by the fact that even though He was the Supreme Brahman, Lord Krishna freely mingled with the Gopas and Gopikas, who belonged to the cowherd clan of Gokulam. This is known as "nirantara samslesham" that is making no distinction between Him (Lord Krishna who had the elevated stature as the Lord of the universe) and common folk like the cowherds. saulabhyam "sakala manuja

nayana viShayatAm gatatvam" denotes easy accessibility. Only a few are privy to His glorious form in Paramapadam as described in the salutation "savyaM pAdaM prasArya shrita durita haraM dakShiNaM kuncayitvA jAnuni AdhAya savyetarAmitara bhujaM nAgabhoge nidhAya pashcAdbAhudvayena pratibhaTashamane dhArayan sha~Nkha cakre devIbhUShAdi juShTo dishatu mama sadA sharma vaikuNThanAthaH". Lord Narayana is in His serpent bed with one leg folded and another stretched and exhibits His glorious form for which the Conch and discus serve as ornaments. We have only heard about this description in verse form but not experienced the Lord in His full glory. However, the Lord out of His limitless compassion has arrived in Archa form to confer the same anubhavam for those who seek Him. This is denoted by saulabhyam. Thus, Svami Desikan uses the tribute mahite to glorify Daya Devi, who facilitated the Lord's arrival in Archa form to grace His seekers. It may be helpful to recall the tribute "doShA bhaveyurete yadi nAma daye tvayA vinAbhUtaH" from a prior verse of the Daya Satakam to denote the fact that bereft of Daya, all other kalyaNa guNams turn out to be flaws. This is reflected in the "mahite" tribute of the present verse. Lord Srinivasa exudes compassion for all His Saranagatas. The grace of Daya Devi is such that even the hypothetical instance of Mahalakshmi Thayar Herself complaining about Saranagatas to the Lord would be over ruled in the manner of PeriyAzhvar's Pasuram tribute "tAmaraiyAL Akilum citakuraikkumEl en aDiyAr atu ceiyAr". Specifically, the import of this tribute is that the Lord Himself declares "My dAsabhUtas would not do any wrong". Since this comes about due to the Daya guNam of Lord Srinivasa, She is universally hailed. In this instance Svami Desikan uses the tribute mahite to glorify Daya Devi. Next comes the tribute "dhR^ita vibudhe budhe" budhe denotes learned ones (vidvans). vibudhe denotes the foremost among the learned ones. The tribute in this context is meant to highlight the role of Daya Devi with respect to Vidvans. vibudhe here denotes those vidvans blessed with a clear understanding of the svarUpam of Prapatti. Those who realize their inability to pursue the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam, those who are helpless (akinchanas), while at the same time being anxious to gain moksham at the end of the current birth and not prepared to wait an eternity for gaining this benefit are referenced in the context of vibudha. Daya Devi makes it Her priority to come to the rescue of vibudhas. vibudha can also mean Devas. Daya Devi could be legitimately viewed as one who ensures protection of the Devas. However, in this instance since the focus is on Saranagati, the vibudha reference is intended solely to describe the mahans who have resorted to the mode of Prapatti. Next the tribute "budheShu vitatAt madhure madhure" is examined.



mangalAnAM ca mangalam

Here, the glorification of budhe is meant to denote Acharyas. Here the glorification for Daya Devi, who choses learned ones (budhe/Acharyas) to intercede on behalf of the jivan and formally submit the appeal for protection on their behalf. The task performed by Daya Devi is assigned to Acharyas. The eulogy "vitatAt madhure madhure" is the act of Daya Devi performing anupravesham (incarnating) as an Acharya. The delectable task of nirUpAdhika raksha (unconditional absolute protection) of Saranagatas by Daya Devi, assigned to Acharyas is the reference here. The svarUpam, and guNams of Lord Srinivasa are also alluded to in the tribute "madhure madhure" . For example, one may feast on Sakkarii Pongal (rice and lentil cooked with ghee and jaggery) to one's content on a given day. However, the very thought of the Sakkarai Pongal the next day and following day causes one to salivate at the mouth. In the month of Margazhi, Pongal is the staple diet. As the month commences, everyone looks forward to Pongal prasadam with great enthusiasm. However, over the course of the next few days, due to the repetitive nature of the Prasadam, enthusiasm wanes. Precisely to restore this enthusiasam, Sakkarai Pongal offering is made on the days of nAyakanAi and kUDArai vellum pasurams, followed by Thayir Saadam (yoghurt rice). This makes the offerings "madhure madhure". In a like manner, mere contemplation of the svarUpam and guNams of the Lord are in the manner of "madhure madhure" (unceasingly delectable). This is captured in the salutation "kathayantashca mAM nityaM tuShyanti ramanti ca" (those who glorify the Lord take delight in the task and enjoy it immensely). This is true both for one who exposits on the glory of Lord Srinivasa as well as the listeners. The mere mention of the Lord's guNams and svarUpam brings forth great joy to both the expositor as well as the listener. The divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa is also fit for glorification as "madhure madhure". The salutation "tAsAmavirabhUt shauriH smayamAnamukhAmbujaH pItAmbaradharaH sragvI sAkShAt manmatha manmathaH" becomes relevant here. The Gopikas of Gokulam are longing for a darsanam of Lord Krishna. While they are seeking Him thus, He graces them with a darsanam in a flash. The smiling face of Lord Krishna, adorned with the Pitambaram (yellow robe) makes Him appear as the manmatha for manmatha himself! He is glorified as "adharaM madhuraM vadanaM madhuram" (His lips are sweet as is His speech). The tribute "madhurAdipatherakhilaM madhuram" denotes the fact that everything associated with the Lord of Madhura (Krishna) is sweet. Lord Ranganatha arrives at the Paramapada Vasal in Srirangam adorned with vajrAngi. It seems as though this alankaram is tailor-made for Lord Ranganatha alone. The delight experienced in a direct sevai of this utsavam is matchless. Thanks to technology, these days one can

get a glimpse of this sevai on one's smart phones and partake of the anubhavam. The same is true of the vajrAngi sevai for Lord Varadaraja at Kanchipuram. A mere recollection of this divine experience fills the mind with great joy. When Lord Krishna resolved to kill Bhishma on His own when He perceived Arjuna to be ineffective in His fight with Bhishma, and advanced with Chakram in hand, Bhishma welcomed Him with the tribute "ehi ehi pullAkSha padma netra" (Oh Lotus eyed one, please come and rid me of this bodily existence! It will be my bhagyam to beget death at Your hands). The divyamangala vigraham of Lord Krishna in the battlefield exuded matchless beauty worthy of the description "madhure madhure". Svami Madhurakavi Azhvar glorifies Svami NammAzhvar in the opening verse of KaNNinun SiRuthAmbu as "KaNNinun ciRuthAmbinAl kaTTuNNa paNNiya perumAyan enappanil naNNI tenkurukUr nambi enRakkAl aNNikkum amutUrum ennAvukkE" (The very mention of Svami NammAzhvAr coats my tongue with the life giving elixir of amrutam). Thus, there can be nothing sweeter than the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, Svami Desikan uses the tribute "madhure madhure" to describe Daya Devi in this verse. The next tribute of this verse "vR^iShagiri sArvabhauma dayite" pins down Daya Devi as the object of the "madhure madhure" glorification. (The emperor who has taken root at Vrushagiri [Lord Srinivasa] is extremely fond of Daya Devi, who is glorified through the "madhure madhure" tribute). Here the sambodhanam is for Daya Devi who is glorified thus. She is further described as "bhAvuka nidhe" (the one who presides over everything auspicious). Lord Narayana is glorified in the ViShNu sahasranAmam as "mangalAnAM ca mangalam". Daya Devi rules over this Lord Narayana! Thus Daya Devi becomes the cause of auspiciousness in everything auspicious. The usage "SriH" is employed to describe everything auspicious. Since it has been established that Daya Devi is no different from Thayar glorified as Sri, She becomes responsible for auspiciousness in everything auspicious. The elaborate glorification of Daya Devi through the numerous sambodhanams sets the stage for Svami Desikan's formal surrender "bhavamUla harAM laharIm". It is in the manner of coaxing and cajoling a little child to extract a favor. lahari denotes the waves arising from the torrential flow of Daya Devi. Earlier verses have undertaken a comparison of the Daya flow with that of the puNya nadis (sacred rivers) Sarasvati, Ganga, and Yamuna and established that the Daya flow is superior to all of them. Here, Svami Desikan desires that the Daya flow be directed towards him as evidenced in the eulogy "bhavuka nidhe nidhehi". The benefit arising from the Daya flow being thus directed is described in the salutation "bhavamUla harAM laharIm". That is the Daya flow destroys at the root all sins. All karma is thus destroyed. This is possible

only for Daya Devi and no one else. This is the formal surrender of Svami Desikan to the feet of Daya Devi. In a like manner may all of us who listen to the exposition of this verse become privy to the grace of Daya Devi and beget the blessing of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam. It is our customary practice to begin each upanyasam with a tribute for Svami Desikan. For the upanyasam pertaining to this slokam, we began with the recitation of a verse from the prArthana aShTakam, a stotram composed by Svami Kumara Varadachariar (the son of Svami Desikan) "j~nAnabhaktyAdi satsampat pradAyinyAnukampayA syAdasAviti vIkShasva vedAntAcAryavarya mAm" (Here, the request is for Svami Desikan to grace him.



May Your (Swami Desikan's) compassionate eye-glances fall upon us!

"Your (Swami Desikan's) compassionate eye-glances must fall upon me. These eye-glances confer the boons of true knowledge about Lord Narayana and the Atma. These eye-glances aid in the growth of Bhakti towards Lord Narayana and Acharyas. This also confers sat-sampat, namely untainted pure wealth." In this

context, it is helpful to note that all other forms of wealth are asat sampat - that which is prone to contamination due to the source of the wealth. However, the j~nAna and Bhakti conferred by Svami Desikan's compassionate eye-glances are absolutely blemishless and untainted. Therefore, this denotes sat-sampat. The concluding part of this tribute requests that Svami Desikan out of his limitless compassion cast his eye-glances on Svami Kumara Varachariar so that even he (Swamy Kumara Varadachariar) is blessed with growth of j~nAna and Bhakti.) We too need to submit a similar appeal to Svami Desikan for growth of knowledge about Lord Narayana, growth of Bhakti towards Lord Narayana, and Acharyas, as well as for fructification of knowledge of Atma svarUpam. Furthermore, we need to request Svami Desikan for the benefit of blemishless (niraparAdheShu) kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana and His Bhagavatas and thus conclude this upanyasam with smaraNam of Daya Devi in these thoughts."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You are far too soft and tender hearted. You help sustain the learned seers who have the correct perception; also the Devas, who have been charged with great responsibilities for the maintenance of the universe. You are interested in the wellbeing of, and the attainment of auspices of those discerning beings who have forsaken all desires, lust, and ambition. You invested learned men, spiritual preceptors and Acharya Purushas with the holy duty and responsibility of offering spiritual achievement, Bhara-Samarpanam, to countless common folk. You are dearest to the heart, close to the chest of Lord Srinivasa, the master of twin universes - Leela Vibhuti and Nitya Vibhuti. You do His bidding. You commend the right people to Him; You shower Your grace on doubting dull heads and reform them. Thereby You fulfill the Lord's plan for His Saranagatas. You are the store-house of all auspices, which become realizable to the common folk due to Your grace, when they surrender to You. You are a sweet personage; heartening, enjoyable even in mind by contemplation of all the good You render. Not only are the gifts You render sweet but Your very personage is sweet and honey-like for mere contemplation. You are loved and respected by all Your beneficiaries, not to speak of Your Master, Lord Srinivasa. Indeed, He adores You most among all of His possessions, since You bring Him His real reputation! I now submit my plea. You ought to take pity on me; cause a torrential flow of Your flood on me, so that the deep roots that bind me securely to this mundane earthy region are cut asunder and I will be enabled to be at the Lord's feet, which is the only world, the only area of activity, and my only interest, to which I will be single mindedly devoted, not knowing anything else in the Universe! "



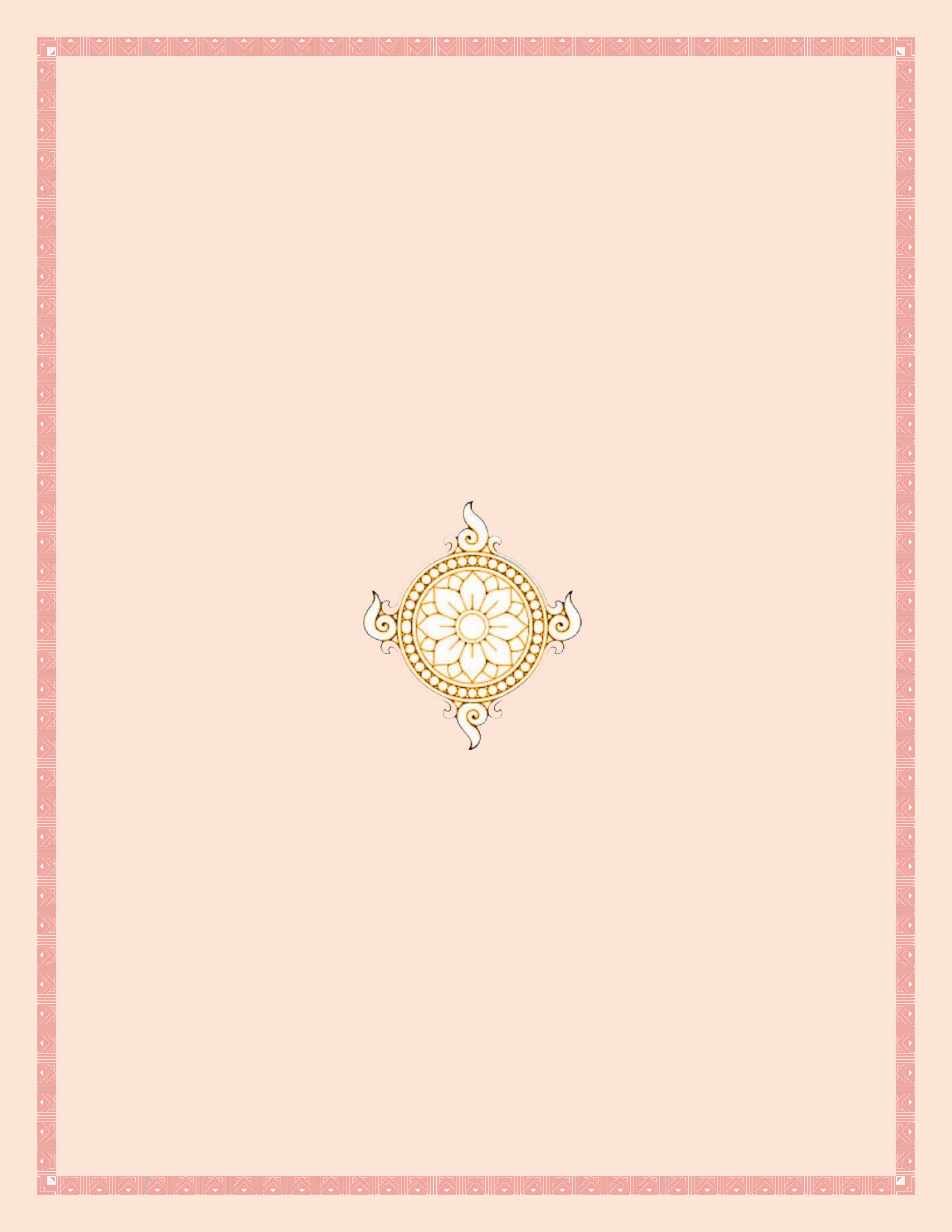

SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 61 –70)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



Sri:





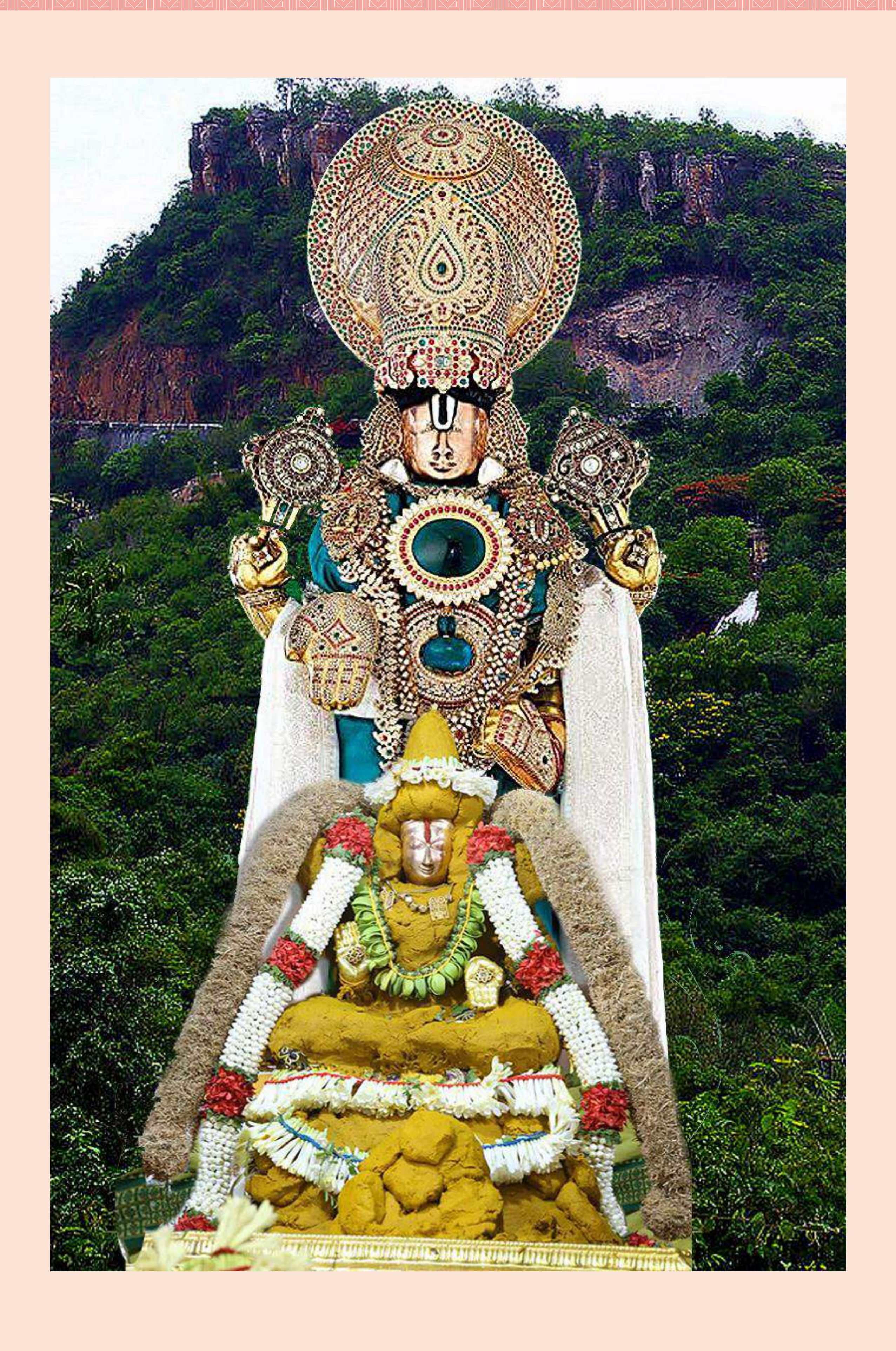
SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



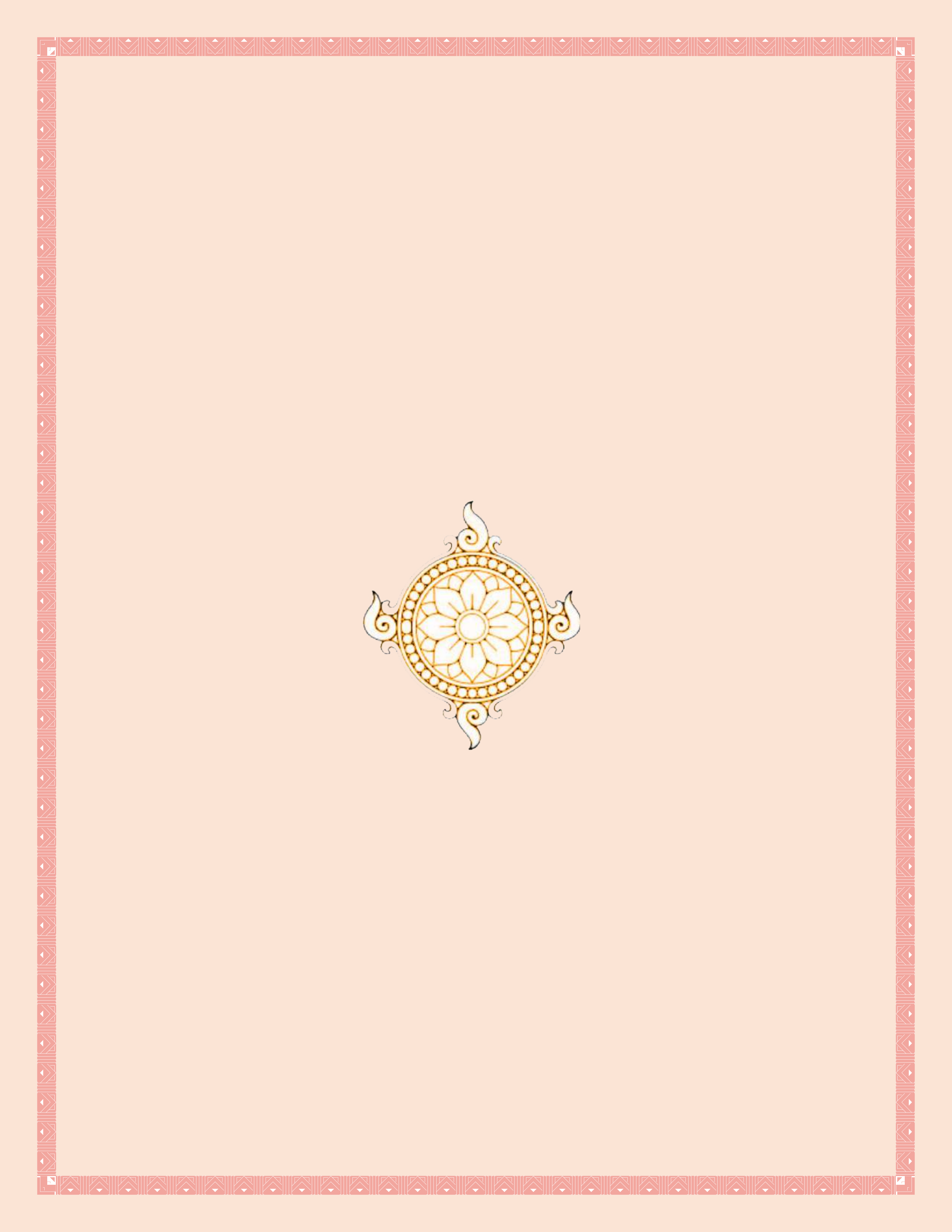


SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||



Slokam 61

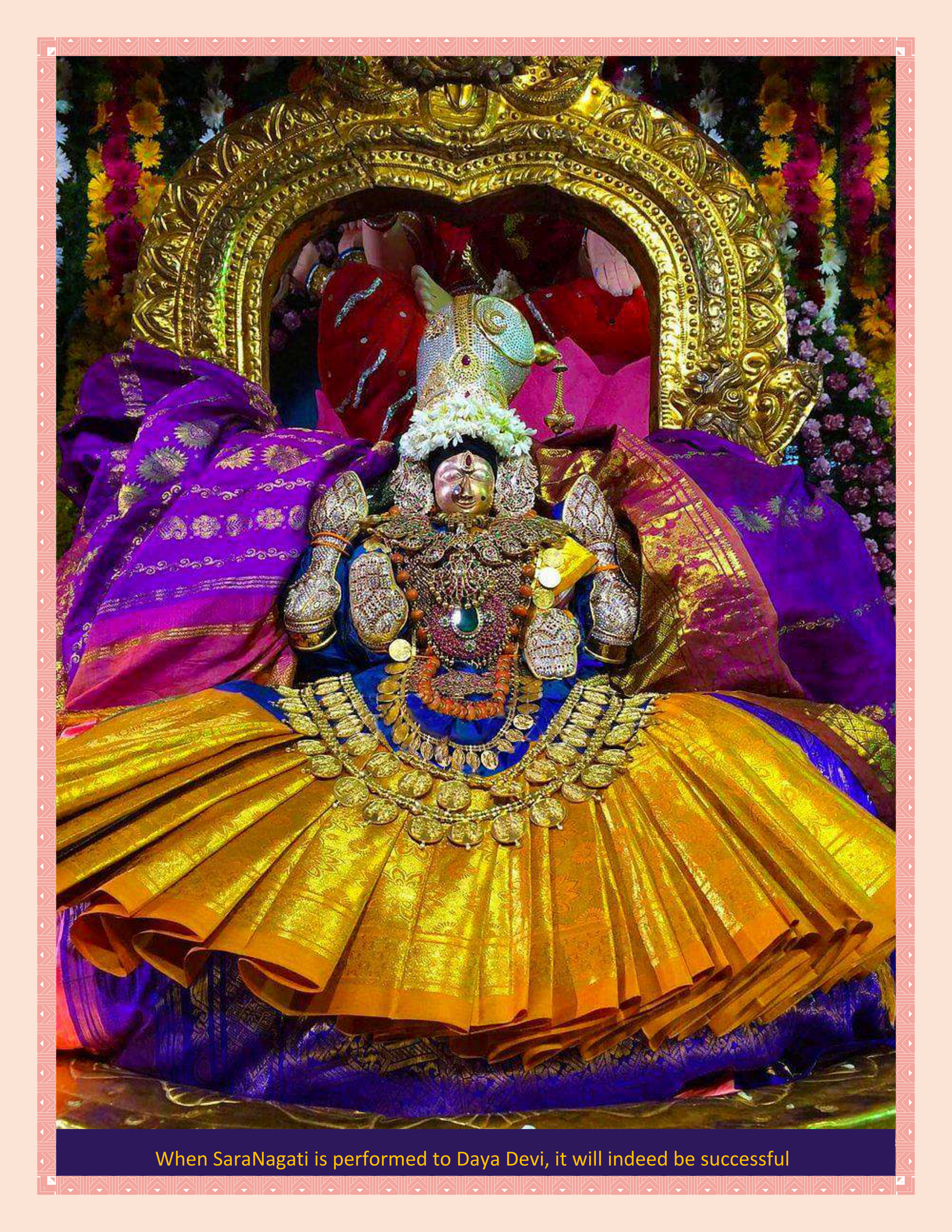
अकूपारैरेकोदक समय वैतण्डिक जवैः
अनिर्वाप्यां क्षिप्रं क्षपयितुमविद्याख्य बडबाम्।
कृपे त्वं तत्तादृक्प्रथिम वृष पृथ्वीधर पति-
स्वरूप द्वैगुण्य द्विगुण निज बिन्दुः प्रभवसि ॥ ६१ ॥

akUpArair ekodaka samaya vaitaNDika javaiH
anirvApyAM kShipraM kShapayitum avidhyAkhya baDabAm|
kR^ipe tvaM tattAdR^ik prathima vR^iSha pR^ithvI dhara pati
svarUpa dvaiguNya dviguNa nija binduH prabhavasi||61



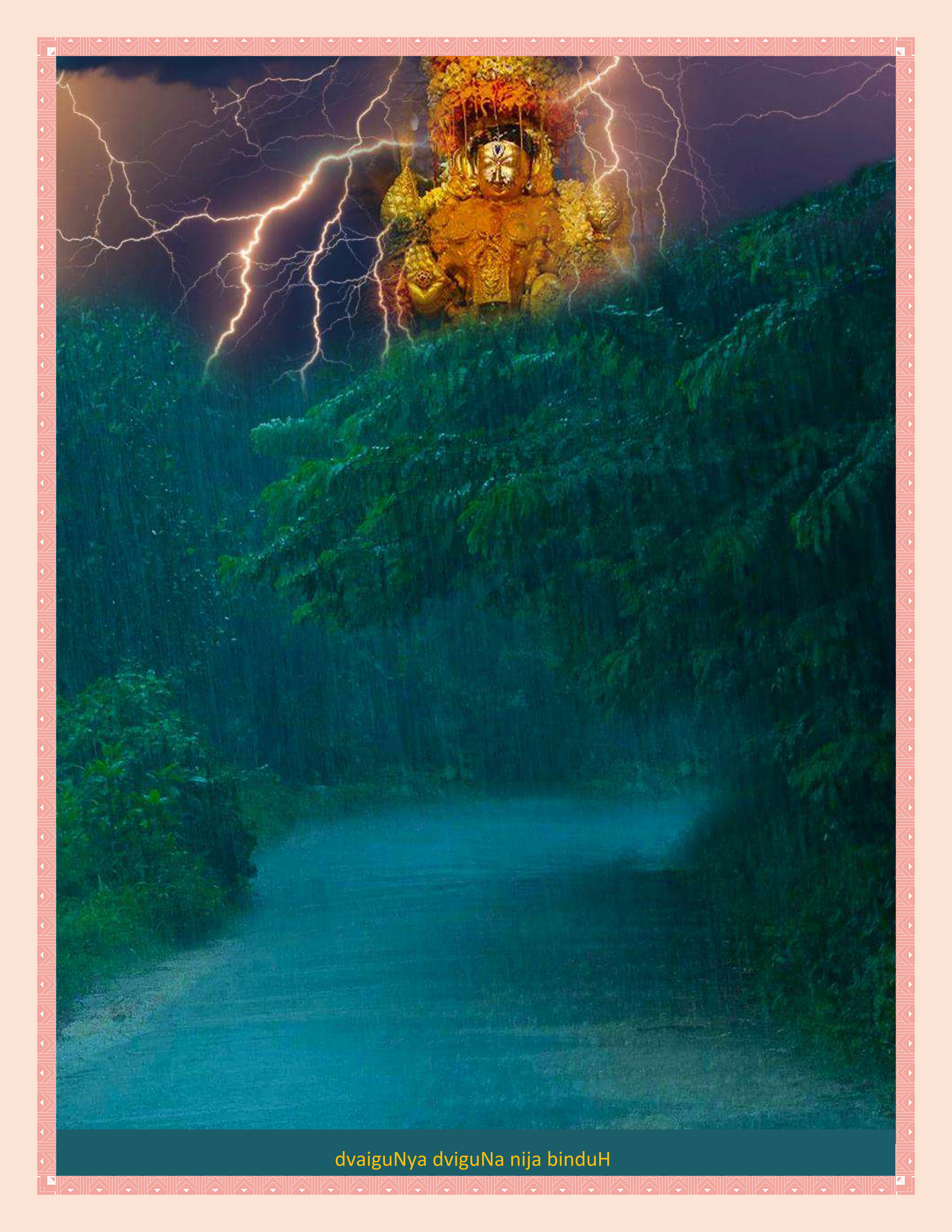
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now commence the exposition on the 7th decad of the Daya Satakam. The previous set of ten verses commenced with the tribute "ati kR^ipaNopi" and ended with a formal surrender to Daya Devi to destroy at the root karma that binds individuals to samsaraam through the eulogy "bhavamUlaharAm laharIm". This set of ten verses is set to ShikkaraNi meter. This meter glorifies Daya Devi, who resides in the elevated place of the Venkatam Hill. In the previous verse, Svami Desikan performed SaraNagati to Daya Devi. One needs to carefully examine, who is fit for surrendering unto. The individual that one surrenders to must be capable of protecting the SaraNagata. Also, the individual must possess the strength to accept the SaraNagati and its attendant responsibilities. If the surrender is performed to a person that it is unfit for this role, the SaraNagati will not yield the desired fruit. The one to whom SaraNagati is performed must possess a kind heart. He must also be intelligent. One cannot perform SaraNagati to a dim-witted individual having poor intellect. How is it possible to assess whether one has the strength to accept the SaraNagati? In common parlance, if an individual is approached with a request for help, the one submitting the request needs to be sure that the individual can render the requested help. Only such an individual can be approached with the request to help. There may be strong individuals, who possess intellect and strength to render the requested help. However, they may not be willing to help. Again, if such an individual is approached the SaraNagati will not fructify. This is



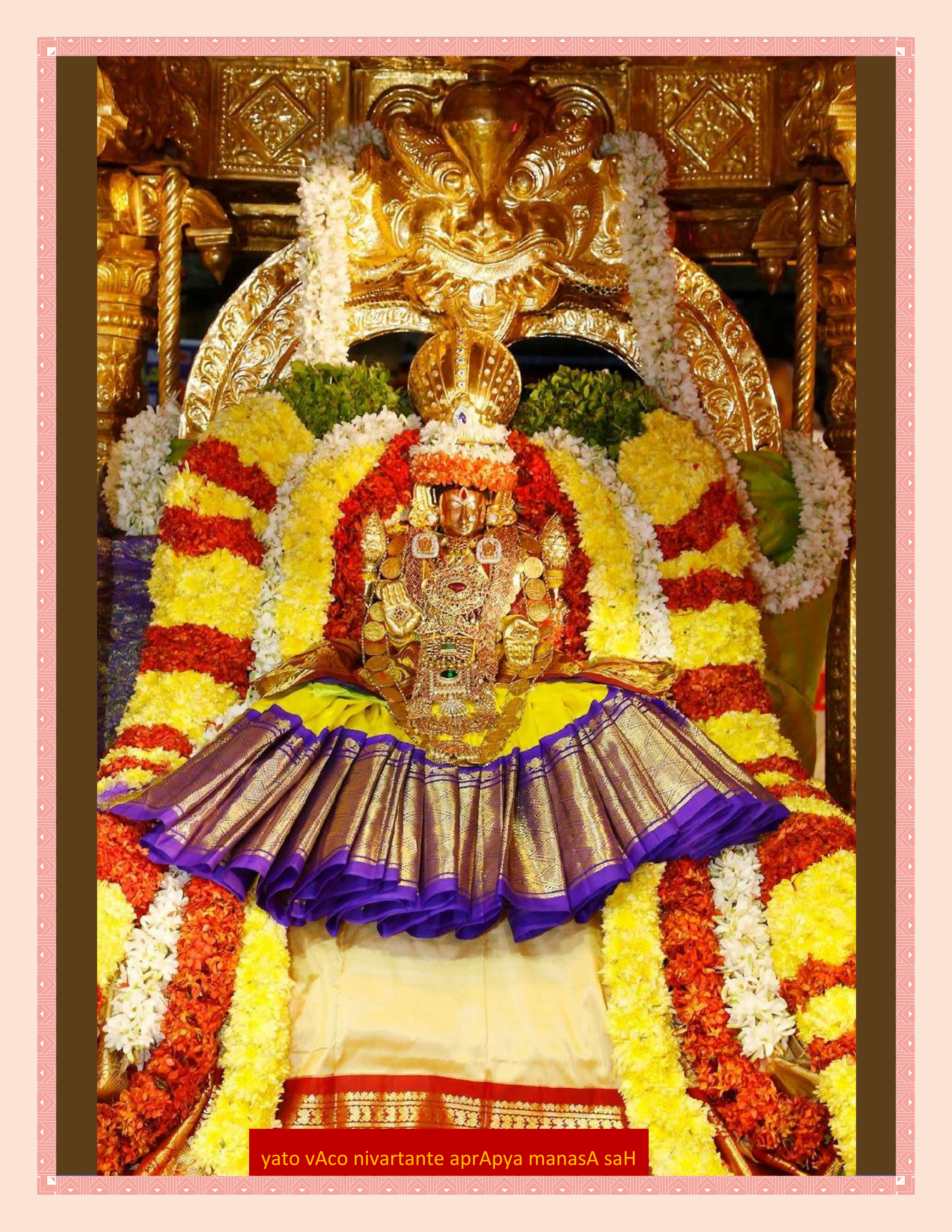
When SaraNagati is performed to Daya Devi, it will indeed be successful

illustrated by the SaraNagati of Lord Rama to the King of the Ocean. On the other hand Vibhishana performed SaraNagati to Lord Rama and was welcomed by the Lord with open arms and granted a prominent role in the campaign against Ravana to recover Sita. When pondering over the matter of crossing over the ocean to get to Lanka, Vibhishana submits the suggestion to Lord Rama "samudraM rAghavo rAjA zaraNaM gantum arhati khAnitaH sagareNAyam aprameyo mahodadhiH" namely if Lord Rama performed SaraNagati to the King of the Ocean, he would automatically pave the way for crossing the ocean, since the ocean itself came about due to the efforts of the sons of Sagara, who was Lord Rama's ancestor. Accordingly, Lord Rama performed SaraNagati to the king of the Ocean, and had taken residence in Darbashayana. Three days passed but the ocean did not budge. This greatly angered Lord Rama, who addressed Lakshmana who was by His side with the declaration "cApam Anaya saumitre sharAMshcAshIviShopamAn adyAkShobhyam api kruddhaH kShobhayiShyAmi sAgaram padyAM yAntu plavangamaH" (Oh Saumitra! Bring Me My bow and quiver full of fierce arrows. I shall transform this ocean into a desert by drying up its water and enable the monkey army to cross over to the other side.) The important point to be noted here is that Lord Rama's SaraNagati to the king of the ocean did not yield fruit. Why? This is due to the fact that the king of the ocean had poor intellect. He was incapable of accepting Lord Rama's SaraNagati. This gives rise to an important question. Svami Desikan performed SaraNagati to Daya Devi in the previous verse. Is Daya Devi endowed with strength and a large heart to accept this SaraNagati and ensure its fructification? In order to answer questions such as these Svami Desikan highlights the glory of Daya Devi in this set of ten verses. This is illustrated through a sambhAShaNam (dialog) between Daya Devi and Svami Desikan, wherein Daya Devi poses a rhetorical question "Oh Svami! You have sought My torrential flow (pravAham) to grace you and destroy at the root all karma that binds you to samsara. However, to invoke this flow the nuances of j~nAna yogam, karma yogam, and bhakti yogam need to be adopted. Have you adopted any of these?" Svami Desikan's responds that he has not adopted any of these means. However, he has performed SaraNgati as prescribed by the Shastras and therefore, Daya Devi has no choice when it comes to his protection. To this Daya Devi responds "Svami! The karma that you have accumulated is not over a day or two but from beginningless time. Therefore, it is endless. Hence, getting rid of this Karma is quite difficult. How do I do this?" Svami Desikan answers this as "Oh Mother Daya Devi! I agree with everything You mentioned. While this is not possible for others, only You possess the means to rid me of this karma." In Srimad Ramayanam, Sugriva dispatched his


dvaiguNya dviguNa nija binduH

vanara army in all directions to locate Sita Devi. The group that proceeded in the southern direction had in its ranks Angada, Jambavan and Hanuman. After an elaborate search, Sita Devi was nowhere to be found. Realizing the grave consequences for not locating Sita Devi, the monkeys decided that it would be better for them to end their lives on the seashore rather than face death at the hands of Sugriva. At that point they encounter SampAthi, the brother of JatAyu, from whom they learn the location of Sita Devi. The next question that comes up is how to cross the ocean to get to Lanka and locate Sita Devi. The Vanaras take stock of how far each of them is capable of going. One of them states that he can cross 20 yojanas, another says 30 yojanas and so forth. When it comes to Angada, he states that he can cross 100 yojanas and get to Lanka but is unsure that he will be able to return. Jambavan states that during the Trivikrama avataram, he was youthful and strong and could circumambulate the gigantic form of the Lord three times. However, now that he has aged, he is unsure of his ability to cross the ocean. Jambavan then turns towards Hanuman, who remained silent all this while and remained aloof from the other Vanaras and addresses him as "aneka shata sAhasrIm viShaNNAm hari vAhinIm jAMbavAn samudIkShya evam hanumantam atha abravIt vIra vAnara lokasya sarva shAstra vidAm vara tUShNIm ekAntam Ashritya hanuman kim na jalpasi" (Oh Hanuman! You are well versed in the Shastras, foremost among the Vanaras, why do you remain silently engaged in Rama nama japam and not speak up?) He continues "hanuman hari rAjasya sugrIvasya samo hi asi rAma lakShmaNayoH ca api tejasA ca balena ca" (You are equal to our king Sugriva, you also have a stature similar to Rama and Lakshmana. Your radiance and strength are legendary. Why do you remain silent here?). Jambavan further glorifies Hanuman "pakShayoH yat balam tasya tAvat bhuja balam tava vikramaH ca api vegaH ca na te tena apahIyate" (Hanuman's valor and strength are on par with that of Garuda. Hanuman's pace of travel is the same as that of Garuthman.) "balam buddhiH ca tejaH ca sattvam ca hari sattama vishiShTam sarva bhUteShu kim AtmAnam na sajjase" (Do I have to exposit on your glory? Are you not aware of your extraordinary capabilities?) In a like manner, when Daya Devi submits Her rhetorical question to Svami Desikan about his karma being accumulated over aeons, being immeasurable, endless and engulfing to the point where they cannot be destroyed at their root, Svami Desikan responds "Oh Daya Devi! You are not aware of Your extraordinary prowess. Adiyen will highlight this in this tribute. This task of destroying my karma at its root is a trifle as far as You are concerned." This verse is "akUpArair ekodaka samaya vaitaNDika javaiH anirvApyAM kShipraM kShapayitum avidhyAkhya baDabAm|kR^ipe tvaM

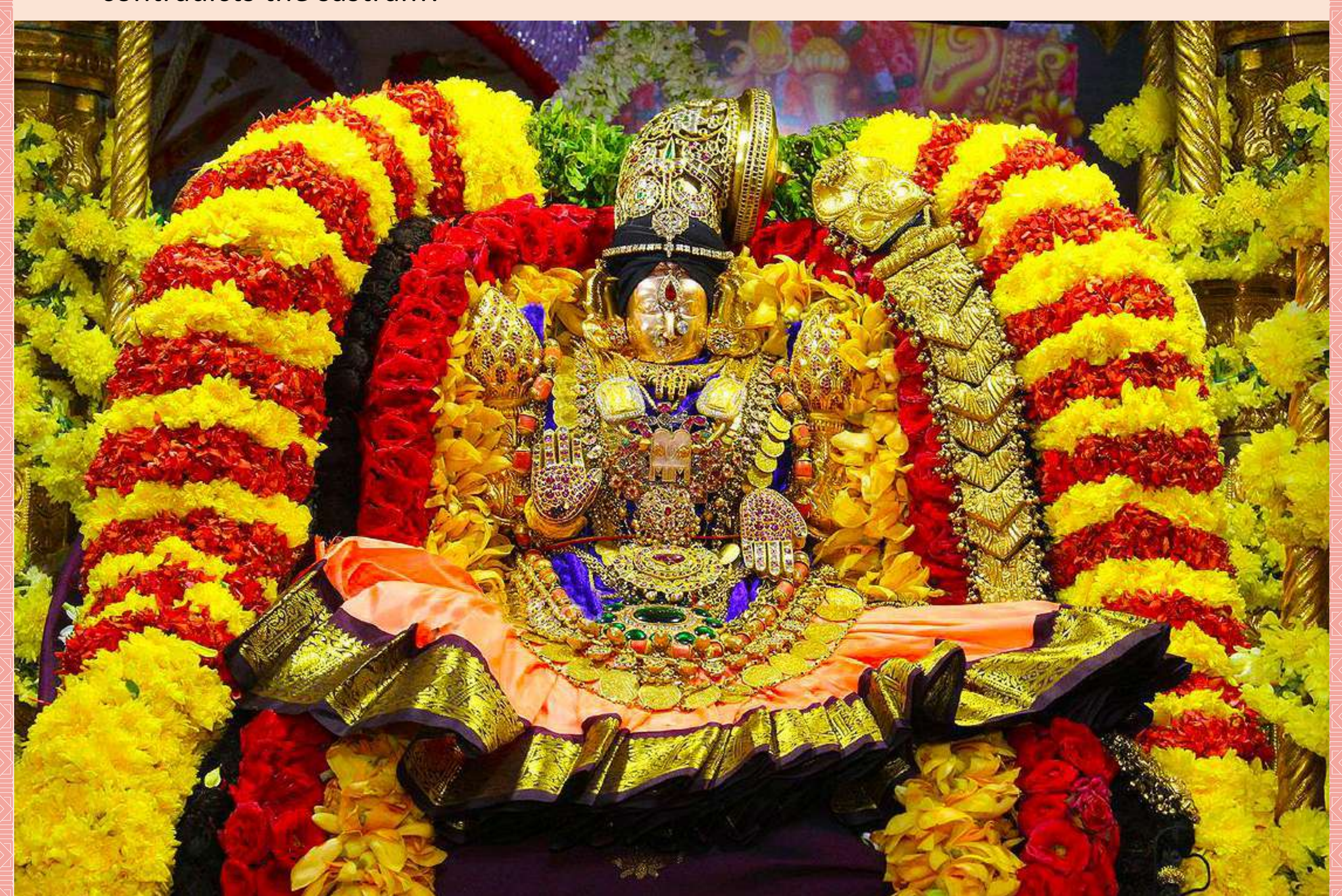
tattAdR^ik prathima vR^iSha pR^ithvI dhara pati svarUpa dvaiguNya dviguNa nija binduH prabhavasi". Here Svami Desikan describes the darkness caused due to nescience for baddha jivans in terms of the baDaba agni, which emanates from the mouth of a female horse that exists below the ocean bed and cannot be destroyed even during praLayam. Agni is generated from samit or blocks of wood. However, the baDaba agni uses the ocean water for its sustenance (indhanam). This baDaba agni can never be extinguished. The avidya (ignorance) of baddha jivans too is in a similar state (indestructible). "avidya karma samj~nAnya" is the declaration that formally describes avidya. This declaration provides the equivalence between avidya and karma. Next it becomes useful to dwell on praLayam. Lord Srinivasa engages in the task of sR^iShTi (creation). He endows sentient beings with body, arms, legs, and sense organs with the sole motivation that the sentient beings put these to use for seeking knowledge about Lord Narayana and engaging in the means for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Instead of being aligned with the Lord's intent, due to prior karma, the jivan resorts to forbidden acts that are in violation of sastraic prescriptions. As a consequence, the jivan is enduring the consequences of these actions, accumulated over a long time. Unable to withstand this sight, the Lord causes mahapraLayam - great deluge. During this time all beings are rendered in a state of inertness. The accumulated karma is described in terms of the baDaba agni, that cannot be extinguished even during the time of PraLayam. This is captured in the salutation "ekodaka samaya vaitaNDika javaiH akUpAraiH". A well, lake, pond, river or ocean are distinct bodies of water. Instead, if one can visualize a continuous body of water that is so vast in its expanse that it is all engulfing, it captures the meaning of "ekodaka samaya vaitaNDika javaiH akUpAraiH". The waves of the ocean break up upon hitting the shoreline. However, during praLayam the waves from the seven oceans combined are cresting left, right and center without breaking. This resembles the speech of those engaged in vithaNDA vAdam (fluff without substance). The tribute "akUpArair ekodaka samaya vaitaNDika javaiH anirvApyAM kShipraM kShapayitum avidhyAkhya baDabAm" captures the fact that one's karma/nescience is similar to the baDaba agni, which cannot be extinguished by the cresting waters of praLayam. The consequence of "avidya" from this tribute is sheShatva j~nAna virodhi, namely the jivan forgets the fact that it is the undisputable property of Lord Narayana, who is the controller/master for the jivan, and that the jivan is forever subservient to Lord Narayana. sheShatva j~nAnam denotes the relationship between Lord Narayana and the jivan as described in the salutations "dAsabhUtasvataH sarve hyAtmAnaH paramAtmana" (all beings in the universe are dAsabhUtas for Lord Narasimha) "aDimai…


yato vAco nivartante aprApya manasA saH

AraNarkku allAl" (We are slaves of the Lord and His Bhagavatas and none else). That which is opposed to this knowledge is the avidya. The functioning of the baDaba agni is similar in that it consumes the very ocean waters that provide it sanctuary and instead lays waste to the ocean waters. The avidya causes sharIra Atma bhramam and svatantara Atma bhramam. That is, the jivan mistakenly believes that the sharIra (body) and Atma (soul) are the same and even in the instance that the jivan recognizes that the body and soul are different, it has the mistaken impression that the Atma is independent, thus giving no chance for the jivan for redemption. This avidya is so strong that it cannot be destroyed by waters of PraLayam. The tribute "anirvApyAM kShipraM" denotes the fact that Daya Devi instantaneously expunges the avidya that is impossible even for the PraLayam waters to destroy. How is this possible? Clearly, the ocean waters are incapable of destroying the baDaba agni. Only the megha vR^iShTi (rain from clouds), which are denoted by puShkala and Avartaka are capable of extinguishing the baDaba agni. Due to this vR^iShTi, the avidya, which is akin to baDaba agni is destroyed. What sort of a cloud is this? Who is denoted by this cloud is discussed next! The cloud is none other than Daya Devi. Next follows a comparison between a small sprinkling of Daya (say an atomic particle) and Lord Narayana. This is captured in the salutation "tattAdR^ik prathima vR^iSha pR^ithvI dhara pati svarUpa dvaiguNya dviguNa nija binduH" (Oh Daya Devi! Your glory is indescribably high. Lord Srinivasa resident on top of the Venkatam hill is immeasurably great as evidenced by the Vedam tribute "yato vAco nivartante aprApya manasA saH" (Words cannot adequately describe His glory. The mind cannot fully comprehend His greatness). He is characterized by the attributes of "satyam j~nAnam and anantam" (Truth, knowledge, and infiniteness). This is the divyAtma svarUpam of Lord Narayana as described by the Vedam in the tribute "kam brahma kam brahma". A tiny speck of Daya Devi is equivalent to four times the glory of Lord Narayana as described herein. This is captured in the tribute "dvaiguNya dviguNa nija binduH" "IriraNDu mAlvarai tOL". If this is the nature of Daya Devi, it is readily apparent that when Her grace befalls a baddha jivan, their avidya is instantaneously destroyed. This is Svami Desikan's tribute to Daya Devi. In a prior verse (verse 58), the connection of Daya Devi to KR^iShNa megham was made. Specifically, She is the water from the dark rain-bearing cloud known as Lord Srinivasa. The tribute that needs to be remembered in this context is "janitAm janitApaharAm".

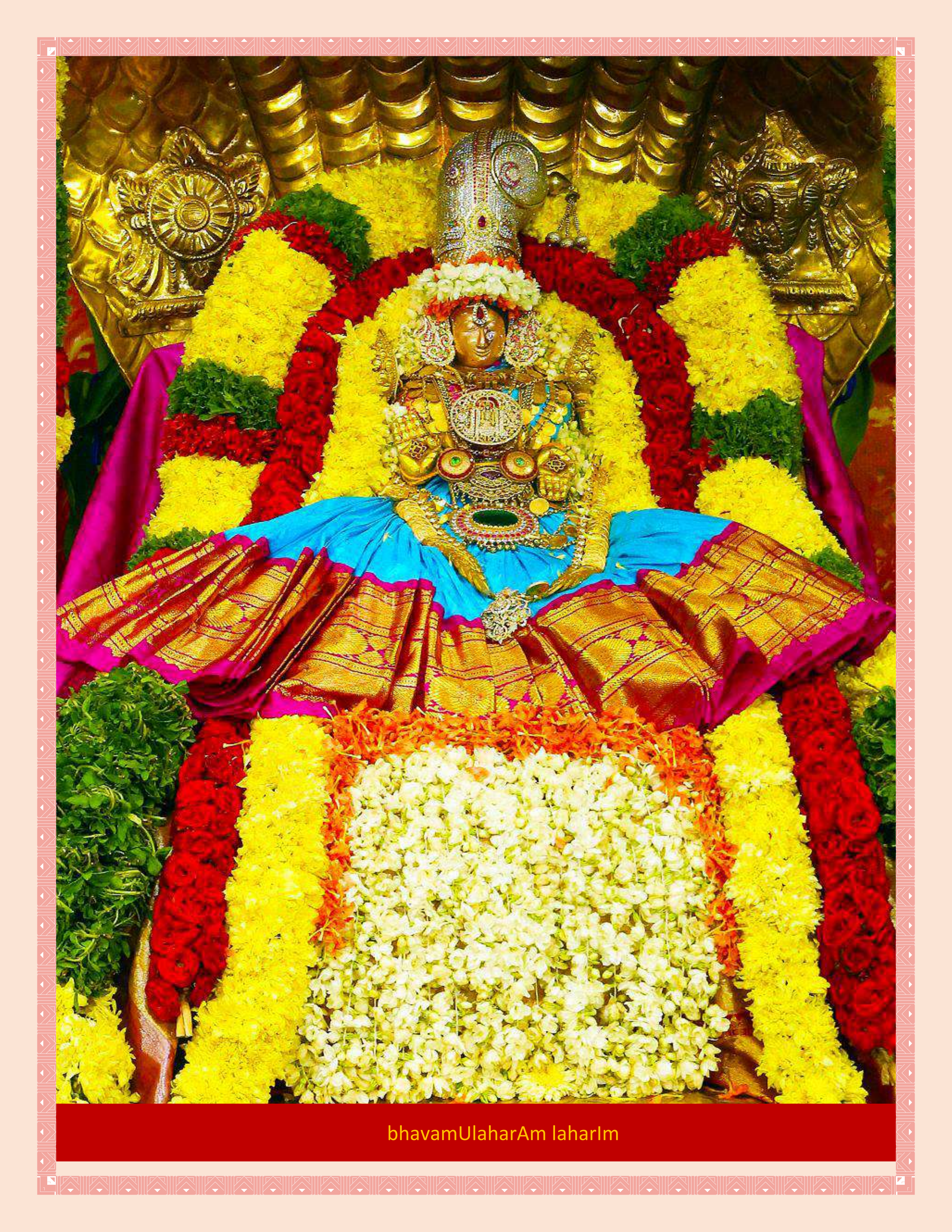
In this verse the flow of Daya, which is in the form of Pushkala Avartaka vR^iShTi, in a moment destroys the avidya/karma of baddha jivans, which has been accumulated over a long time, which is endless and which is difficult to

exterminate. Here an important question arises. It is well known that Bhagavad svarUpam of Lord Narayana is immeasurable and infinite. This Bhagavad svarUpam is declared by Svami Desikan to be equivalent to an atomic particle of Daya Devi. Does this not then make the claim that the infinite and immeasurable divyAtma svarUpam of Lord Narayana is now measurable? How could Svami Desikan, who is known for conformance to Sastraic prescriptions, make a statement that contradicts the sastram?



The flow of Daya, in a moment destroys the avidya/karma of baddha jivans

Here one must pay attention to the PuruSha sUktam eulogy "pAdosya vishvA bhUtAni tripAdasyAmR^itamdivi" "asya pAdaH" (a quarter part) "vishvA bhUtAni" (constitutes the universe with all its sentient and insentient beings). The remaining three quarters constitutes the Divya Vibhuti (note that Vibhuti in Sanskrit denotes property and is not to be confused with the Tamil usage of Vibhuti to denote ash) of Sri Vaikuntam. Then it denotes the fact that Lord Narayana's divyAtma svarUpam becomes measurable. However, in this instance pAdo is used in the context of ekadesham to denote one part or portion and not one quarter. Thus one part of


bhavamUlaharAm laharIm

the infinite being constitutes the universe with all its sentient and insentient beings. Three parts of the infinite Brahman constitute Sri Vaikuntam. Similarly, the comparison between Daya Devi and Lord Narayana is only on the basis of this relative description and does not take away from the aparicinnam (immeasurable) nature of Lord Narayana. This is solely intended to bring out the greatness of Daya Devi. The Pancharatra Sastram describes the Lord in terms of the tributes shantoditam, antoditam, maha vibhuti, and paramam. shantoditam denotes the fact that one who gains moksham and thereby eternal residence in Sri Vaikuntam, is free from the pangs of thirst, hunger and the like. antoditam denotes the fact that no measure can capture the greatness of Lord Narayana. Maha vibhuti denotes the Nitya VibhUti and LIla VibhUti both of which are infinite in extent. Paramam is the attribute which exceeds all measures. These four characteristics have been elaborated upon by SvAmi Alavandar. In keeping with this tribute, these four characteristics of Lord Narayana are used in a manner to denote the ekadesham with respect to Daya Devi. Therefore, the exposition of this slokam is consistent with the Sastram. Thus, the import of this slokam is that avidya which has been accumulated over a long time, is infinite in extent and indestructible even by the waters of praLayam in the same manner as the baDaba agni, is instantaneously destroyed by a tiny speck of Daya Devi's flow, which is in the manner of PuShkala and Avartaka clouds. This Daya Devi's glory is such that a tiny speck of Her flow is equivalent to four times that of the immeasurable divyAtma svarUpam of Lord Narayana. When SaraNagati is performed to Daya Devi of such loftiness, will it not be successful is the rhetorical question posed by Svami Desikan. The inner meaning is that even if the Lord Himself is inclined to punish the baddha jivan for the sastraic violations over a long time, Daya Devi ensures that the Lord's disposition towards the baddha jivan, who has resorted to Her through SaraNagati, will undoubtedly be changed and that the baddha jivan will beget Bhagavad Kaimkaryam."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! I know Your potency; a drop of Your great universal magnitude could be described as bigger, more extensive, and more potent than four times, that of the massive divyAtma svarUpam of Lord Srinivasa. What is it for me? I have stored sins due to actions born of nescience. They bear fruit as the three fold heat torture (tApatrayam - adyAtmika, Adi bautika, Adi daivika). This fire is almost analogous to the proverbial mystic sub-marine fire, called BaDabamukha agni, which is impossible to quench even by the oceans all merging into one water at the time of PraLayam. Incidentally, the oceans, seven in number, merge into one, making a huge roaring noise continuously. The behavior of oceans is reminiscent of

the loud worthless chatter of wranglers, who argue without logic or reason or literary pramANas (valid sources of knowledge). You alone can successfully quench my sin-fire, which is a veritable BaDabAgni!

1. It is helpful to recall the exposition of verse 13 in this context.

2. Whether in court of law or in Vedantic debates, sometimes a wrong technique is adopted by a speaker, who has no logic or law to support him. It would be mere loud torrential wrangling. Svami Desikan is highly critical of this practice. He uses this verse to suggestively condemn this practice. The ocean's roar is sheer wasteful noise."



Slokam 62

विवित्सा वेताली विगम परिशुद्धेऽपि हृदये
पटु प्रत्याहार प्रभृति पुटपाक प्रचकिताः ।
नमन्तस्त्वां नारायण शिखरि कूटस्थ करुणे
निरुद्ध त्वद्द्रोहा नृपति सुत नीतिं न जहति ॥ ६२ ॥

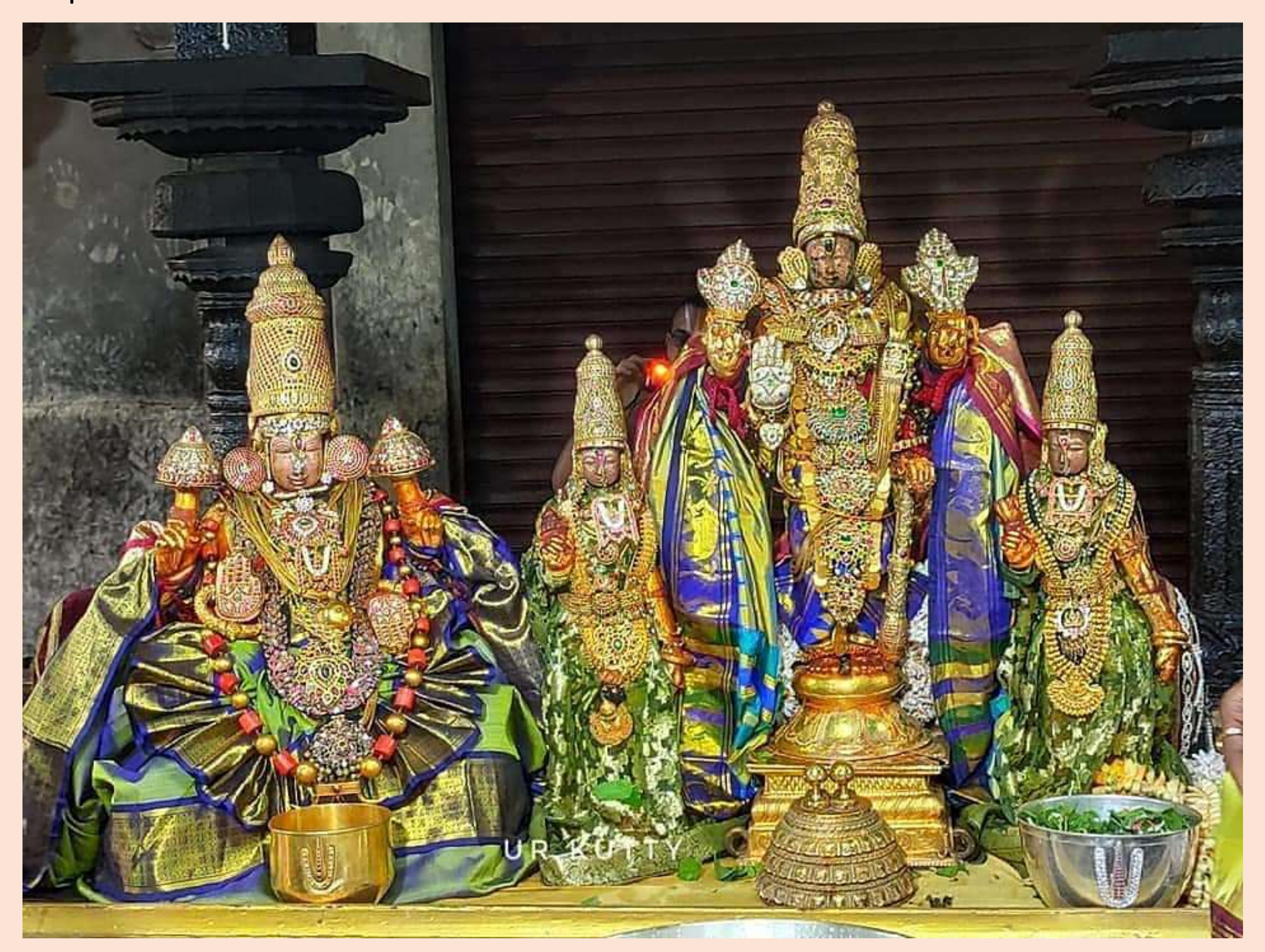
vivitsA vetAlI vigama parishudhde(a)pi hR^idaye
paTu pratyAhAra prabhR^iti puTapAka prachakitAH|
namantas tvAM nArAyaNa shikhari kUTastha karuNe
nirudhda tvaddrohA nR^ipati suta nItiM na jahati||62



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri U. Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"In this verse Svami Desikan continues his eulogy for Daya Devi. Here Daya Devi poses another question to Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! No doubt My pravAham (torrential flow) will destroy the accumulated karma. However, for this to occur, the flow must not have any obstacles. In this instance, it may be a case of My flow ending in a puddle. Have you undertaken any shAstrodita (that which is prescribed by the shastras) upAsana to avoid this because My flow can only occur in places where such practices have been followed? How would it be possible for Me to rid you of these sins otherwise? How can I favor you if you have not undertaken any of these upAsanas? Will I not incur the stigma of favoring you over another (vaiShamya nairguNyam)? Therefore, if you come under the category of one who has adopted the nuances of either Karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, or bhakti yoga, it can be used as an excuse for invoking My grace. However, if you have not done this, it becomes very difficult." To this Svami Desikan responds that he has not adopted any of these practices. Daya Devi then poses the question "how then is it possible for Me to come to your rescue?" Svami Desikan answers this in this verse. In this context it is helpful to recall the tribute of Sri Kuresha to Lord Varadaraja "Oh Lord! Please grant me Moksham." To this Lord Varadaraja responds "You have not

adopted the nuances of Bhakti yogam. How can I grant your request?" Sri Kuresha responds with the verse



karuNAmR^itAbdhe - SrI PerarulAlan with SrI Perundevi Thayar - Kanchi

"tvAmAmananti kavayaH karuNAmR^itAbdhe!

J~nAnakriyAbhajanalabhyamalabhyamanyaiH

eteShu kena varadottara kosalasthAH

pUrvaM sadUrvamabhajanta hi jantavastvAm"

Meaning: Oh Ocean of Mercy! The learned ones glorify You as the One that is attained through the practice of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and bhakti yoga and nothing else. However, I have one important question. After You answer this question, I shall respond to Your question about the nuances of bhakti yogam, j~nAna yogam, or karma yogam that I have adopted. In Your incarnation as Rama, You granted insentient beings like a blade of grass and a stone that were in Ayodhya, the benefit of Moksham. What nuances of karma yogam, j~nAna yogam

or bhakti yogam did they adopt? Once You answer this, I shall gladly respond to Your question about these upAsanAs that I have adopted.

In a like manner Svami Desikan responds "Oh Mother Daya Devi! Just as You stated, Your flow can take place and grace the practitioners of karma yogam, j~nAna yogam, and bhakti yogam. However, I too have performed an act prescribed in the Sastras and am therefore a fitting receptacle for Your flow." This verse documents an important Rahasyam (secret) embedded in the concept of SharaNagati. This verse is "vivitsA vetAlI vigama parishudhde(a)pi hR^idaye paTu pratyAhAra prabhR^iti puTapAka prachakitAH|namantas tvAM nArAyaNa shikhari kUTastha karuNe nirudhda tvaddrohA nR^ipati suta nItiM na jahati||"



Before examining the salutation "vivitsA vetAlI vigama parishudhde(a)pi hR^idaye" it is important to remember that there are two ways to attain Lord Narayana - one is Bhakti Yogam, the other is Prapatti. Either of these means can be adopted for the purpose of gaining Moksham. Thus, both means yield the same benefit. The fact that two different paths yield the same benefit is denoted by the usage vikalpam. vikalpam comes about in two ways niyata vikalpam and aicchikaa vikalpam. During weddings, it is customary to perform a pravishya homam. At this time sankalpam is undertaken with the utterance "yavadjIvam vA yavad AdhAnam vA" (as long as we are alive or we have AdhAnam to perform agnihotram we solemnly vow to perform aupasanam.) It may be asked how will this be carried out? The answer lies in the salutation "yavairva tandalaIr vA juhyAt" (with rice or the dhAnyam yava). The benefit of performing aupasanam either with yavam or rice is identical. This is called aicchika vikalpam. Namely, this difference is a matter of convenience for the performer. Likewise in other instances the vikalpam can come about due to niyata karaNam (as ordained by the sastras). For example, certain tasks can be performed by certain groups of people. In a like fashion, it is outlined in the Sastras that there are two means to attain moksham - bhakti yogam and Prapatti. In this instance the vikalpam coming about on account of Bhakti yogam and Prapatti being two independent means for

gaining Moksham, as elucidated by the Sastras, it becomes niyata vikalpam. Thus, it becomes clear that only one who is fit to undertake the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam can adopt it as a means for gaining moksham. Only those who are incapable of conforming to the nuances of Bhakti yogam can resort to Saranagati for gaining Moksham. Svami Desikan highlights this niyata vikalpam in this verse. Bhakti yogam is adopted by those who have the knowledge and strength to conform to its rigorous requirements. These practitioners too perform Saranagati for ensuring successful completion of their upAsana. Those incapable of Bhakti yogam resort to Saranagati entirely for the purpose of gaining Moksham. One more point of importance needs to be observed. If one has the knowledge and strength and willingness to adopt the prescriptions of Bhakti yogam but is not prepared to wait an eternity (innumerable births for the Karma balance to go to zero) after which moksham is gained, such individuals must perform Saranagati. The important difference between Bhakti yogam and prapatti is that the former requires numerous births to exhaust prarabdha karma, at which point one gains moksham. In the case of Saranagati, moksham is obtained at the moment it is sought. For example, if one is an Arthan (sick of enduring the travails of samsara), and desires Moksham at the instant that Saranagati is performed, he begets this. On the other hand, if the Saranagata desires Moksham at the end of the current birth it is granted as a consequence of Prapatti. Thus, if any one of the factors - knowledge, strength, or waiting time for bhakti yogam to fructify, is missing in an individual, he/she automatically becomes fit for adopting Saranagati to gain moksham.



Again it must be remembered that this verse is a reply to Daya Devi’s question about the upAsanam that Svami Desikan has resorted to in order to invoke the torrential flow of Daya Devi. Here Svami Desikan states “Oh Mother Daya Devi! I am indeed a fitting receptacle for Your torrential flow because, I have performed

Saranagati as ordained by the Sastras. In accordance with my fitness for undertaking this path, I have performed Saranagati. This is in keeping with the Upanishad tribute “tasya vasIkaraNam tat sharaNAgatiH” Another upanishadic tribute “yamevai sharaNate tena labhyaH” declares that only those who the Lord deems fit for Moksham can attain Him. What causes the Lord to deem one fit for Moksham? This is answered in the tribute “tasya vasIkaraNam tat sharaNAgatiH” For example, in the case of aged parents living with one of their children, the parents tend to think mostly about the offspring that is caring for them in their present state and may not think of their other children as often. In a like fashion, that act which causes Lord Narayana to remember His children and deem them fit for Moksham is performance of Saranagati. Therefore, Lord Narayana acts in accordance with this principle and grants Moksham to His Saranagatas. This is the Srivaishnava Siddhantam (doctrinal principle). Thus, it is established that Lord Narayana remembers His children who have performed Saranagati. What is one’s state while this act is being performed becomes the next question. This is described in the salutation “vivitsA vetAlI vigama parishudhde(a)pi hR^idaye”. (Our minds need to be cleansed of the devilish afflictions - namely the infatuation with wealth, grains, property, garden, land, progeny, residence in svarga lokam, wife and the like.) No matter how learned one is, the craze for wealth takes deep root in them and only makes them seek out more of it without limit. So much so it causes the individual to give up numerous Bhagavad Kaimkaryam opportunities in this pursuit. Therefore, it is a devilish affliction (paNa pishAachu as the saying goes in Tamil). In a like manner the other things documented here denote devilish afflictions. The inner meaning is that these items are transient and trivial compared to nitya Brahma anubhavam, which is lasting and permanent. Even if one is cleansed of these afflictions, the Bhakti yogi adopting the upAsana has to conform to the eight angAs (limbs) underlying this upAsana. These are yama, niyama, Asanam, prANAyAma, pratyAharam and the like. PratyAhara and others that follow are most challenging. Before considering this, even proper performance of prANAyAmam is difficult. The yama and niyama prescriptions are meant to gain control over the sense organs. PrANAyAmam has three components - rechakam, pUrakam, and Kumbhakam. First, one has to close one nostril with the thumb and let out air through the other. Then, one has to cover the other nostril with the ring finger and little finger filling it with air. Once this is complete both nostrils need to be covered to preserve the breath. This needs to be done for as long as possible. After this comes pratyAharam, which is the task of subjecting the j~nAnendriyas (sense organs for acquiring knowledge) to be in accordance with the mind (manas). This

is analogous to the Tamil saying of “pudam veikaratu”, namely the task of constraining fire to a given area instead of spreading in all directions. This is accomplished by surrounding the fire pit for the most part with sand. The fire though covered by sand is still burning and gives off a lot of heat. In a like manner, the yogam of pratyAharam causes a lot of discomfort. Therefore, the practitioners of Bhakti Yogam resort to Daya Devi as evidenced in the salutation “tvAM namantaH”.



nArAyaNa shikhari kUTastha karuNe


Sri Daya Devi will never forsake those that surrender to Her

The next tribute “nArAyaNa shikhari kUTastha karuNe” denotes the fact that Daya Devi has taken root in the Narayana hill (one of the Seven Hills at Tiruvenkatam). This is also reflective of the fact that Lord Narayana is our sole protector and that utterance of His names (Narayana Keertanam) results in our ultimate good. In this context, it must be remembered from the opening verse of the Daya Satakam, that Daya Devi alone has caused the solidification of the flow of Srinivasa Daya in the form of the Seven hills, which is like the easy to partake of sugar candy. Therefore, even the Narayanatvam itself comes about on account of Daya Devi. This also conveys the important message of the Narayana shabdam central to Ashtakshara mantram - a key recipe for Saranagatas. Lord Srinivasa who is resident in the Venkatam hill is denoted by the tribute “kUTasthar”, namely He is nirvikAram (He has no change in form). However, even He is transformed by Daya Devi to be greatly moved by the plight of suffering baddha jivans and literally causing Him to melt in the face of Her appeals. Therefore, Daya Devi is resorted to universally. These seekers forever become followers of Daya Devi and never act in a manner that is in violation of Her instructions and are graced in the manner of princes being accorded high honors as evidenced by the salutation “nirudhda tvaddrohA nR^ipati suta nItiM na jahati”. Here, Svami Desikan embeds an important message from Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. The punishment meted out to a commoner by a king is one thing. However, when he discovers that the errant individual is his own son, the blow is softened and only a light punishment is accorded for the same transgression. The inner meaning here is that Saranagatas beget the status of princes. Since they act entirely in conformance with the wishes of Daya Devi and do not engage in the slightest violation of Her commands, She ensures that nothing comes in the way of their coronation for Kaimkarya Samrajyam on the anointed day. This fact is also referenced in the SaraNAgati Deepika tribute “yunjAnacintya yuvarAja padaM bhajanti”. This refers to the fact that those who have performed Saranagati beget the bliss of ceaseless kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana and Sri in Sri VaikuNtam upon gaining moksham. Here, Svami Desikan states that they are coronated as princes, in readiness for becoming emperors in “Kaimkarya Samrajyam”. Thus, for those intimidated by the arduous prescriptions of Bhakti Yogam, the only recourse is Saranagati (unconditional total surrender) to Daya Devi. Those who perform Saranagati to Daya Devi and act entirely in conformance with Her dictats beget the status of princes. They are waiting in readiness for their coronation for the Kaimkarya Pattabhishekam. Due to this fact, they are always under the protection of Daya Devi, who never forsakes



them. We need to be eternally grateful to Svami Desikan for revealing to us the importance of Saranagati to Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi of Sri Narayanadri (Venkata Giri)! Certain noble souls have a purified heart zone, having conquered the demon of desire. They are truly great souls in this respect. Nevertheless, they hesitate to embark on Bhakti upasana discipline. Why? They are scared by the arduous task of withdrawing all vision into the inner soul-which is virtually a kind of roasting in a crucible. They therefore, resort to You through the Prapatti path, oh Daya Devi! They have shed all violations of Your canons. They are faithful to You. They thus fall in the category of the Rule of the Royal Prince - in regard to whose violations in the post-Prapatti era, small punishments alone are meted out. Sometimes a Prayaschitta Prapatti is performed. You allow the favored ones to escape serious punishment as a special case.

It is important to note that certain commentators from a previous era interpret this verse as a criticism of the Bhakti path. Their assumption is that Bhakti Yogam ignores one's PAratantrayam (That is the state of totally being the property of the Lord, without an individuality, or ego or sentience - like Sandalwood, lamp, or flowers in the Lord's paraphernalia). However, Svami Desikan would never disregard the Bhakti path notwithstanding his preference for Prapatti. This verse is intended to highlight the rule of exception accorded to the Royal Prince. We the Prapannas are like the Royal Prince. Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram provides a comprehensive documentation of these concepts. In the post-Prapatti period, one should lead a life of non-violation of the Lord's commands. If a Prapanna errs unconsciously, it is excused. If he commits errors deliberately, it cannot be excused. Will Prapatti fail? Will he be denied Moksham? Not at all. Such transgressions will incur minor punishments. Thus, this verse contains an important instruction with regard to one's conduct in the period after performance of Prapatti."



Slokam 63

अनन्याधीनः सन् भवति परतन्त्रः प्रणमतां

कृपे सर्वद्रष्टा न गणयति तेषामपकृतिम्।

पतिस्त्वत्पाराथ्यं प्रथयति वृष क्ष्माधर पतिः

व्यवस्थां वैयात्यादिति विघटयन्ती विहरसि ॥ ६३ ॥

ananyAdhInaH san bhavati paratantraH praNamatAM

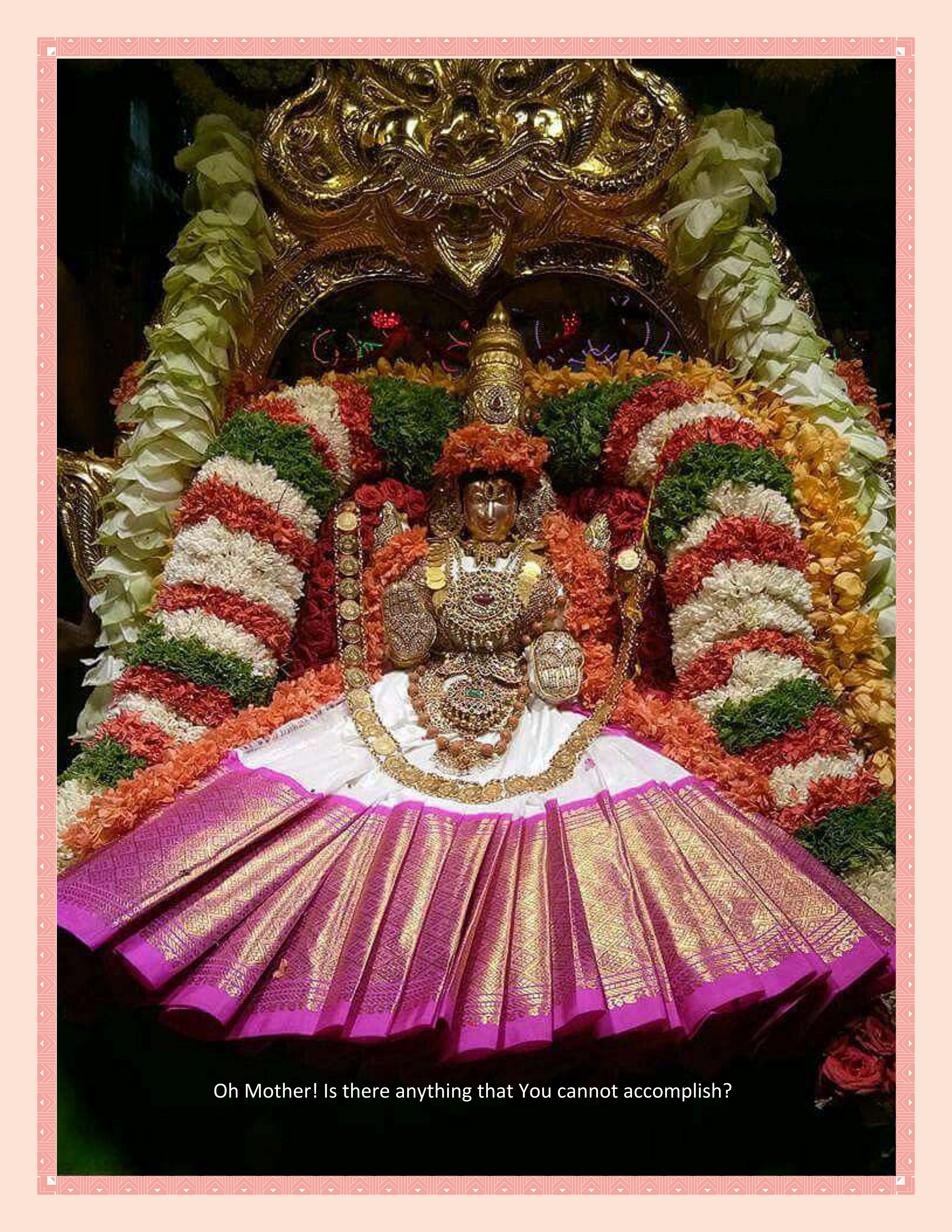
kR^ipe sarvadraShTA na gaNayati teShAm apakR^itim|

patistvatpArArthyaM prathayati vR^iSha kShamAdhara patiH

vyavasthAM vaiyAtyA diti vighaTayantI viharasi||63



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "We commence this tribute from verse 63 of Svami Desikan's outstanding stotram, the Daya Satakam. The delivery of this upanyasam coincides with Makara Sankaranthi day - a sudinam due to the arrival of Thai Masam (Makara Masam). Adiyen had the bhagyam of darsanam at the sannadhi of Sri Varadaraja Perumal prior to commencing this upanyasam and offered prayers on behalf of all Bhagavathas, that hear this series to confer upon them bhagavad anugraham and growth of their Kaimkarya Sri. This decad extols the greatness of Daya Devi. The first verse provides a comparison in the manner of Ekadesam between Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi, wherein Svami Desikan notes that a mere drop of Daya Devi's flow is equivalent to four times the immeasurable divyAtma svarUpam of Lord Srinivasa. In the next verse, Svami Desikan states that there are two paths to attain moksham - Bhakti yogam and Prapatti. The former is extremely demanding due to its arduous requirements, while the latter is simple to adopt. However, the benefit arising from both of them is identical as stated by Svami Desikan. The reason for this is entirely Daya Devi. Thus, regardless of their mountainous sin-pile, and their utter helplessness to adopt the upasanas of Bhakti yogam for redemption, if one surrenders to Daya Devi, She will never forsake them. Instead, She ensures that they beget an elevated status of crown prince for the kingdom of Kaimkarya Samrajyam. Next Daya Devi requests Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! You have glorified Me beyond measure. Please refrain from stating that everything is possible for Me to accomplish. There are some things that I simply cannot do."



Oh Mother! Is there anything that You cannot accomplish?

Svami Desikan asks in response "Oh Mother! Is there anything that it is impossible for You to accomplish?" To this Daya Devi responds "Indeed Svami! If one adopts a means for a specific objective, only Lord Narayana can grant this benefit in keeping with the declaration "sakalaphala pradopi viShNuH" . I am totally powerless when it comes to granting the desired benefit. Therefore, when it comes to Dharma, Artha, Kama, granting of wealth, luxuries, and other desires, only Lord Narayana can bestow these upon the seeker. When this is the case, why are you glorifying Me instead of Him? A second point of note is that the Vedanta Sutram declares "phalam atha upapadyateH" That is, yagas are undertaken for example with the objective of gaining Svarga vAsam. One who confers the fruits of the yagam is Lord Narayana alone. It is a commonly held belief that the deity that is glorified in the yagam grants the fruit. However, it must be borne in mind that Lord Narayana, who remains as the in-dweller of the deities glorified in these yagas is the one that grants the fruit. This point has also been established in the Sri Bhashyam by Svami Bhashyakarar. When this is the case, it seems inappropriate for you to glorify Me and request the elevated boon of Moksham. Well even granting the fact that I make a recommendation to the Lord for granting you Moksham, Lord Narayana acts independently. Once He decides to do something nobody can stop Him. Therefore, it becomes impossible for Me to command Him to perform a certain task. Could it be possible that I am highlighting something that is unknown to the Lord? Even this is impossible because Lord Narayana is all-knowing. When this is case how is it possible for Me to influence Him to confer His grace on you for this elevated benefit?"

Svami Desikan provides a point-by-point response to the issues raised by Daya Devi in this verse. This verse is "ananyAdhInaH san bhavati paratantraH praNamatAM kR^ipe sarvadraShTA na gaNayati teShAm apakR^itim patistvatpArArthyaM prathayati vR^iSha kShamAdhara patiH vyavasthAM vaiyAtyA diti vighaTayantI viharasi" The import of this verse is "Oh Mother Daya Devi! Every word You have uttered is absolutely true. Where is this documented?" asks Swami Desikan. Daya Devi responds "In the Vedas Svami, which you accept as the supreme pramANam. They declare that there exists none that is superior to Lord Narayana, that can rule over Him and command Him. Thus, He is the only one who rules over the two vibhutis - nitya vibhuti and leela vibhuti. There is none that can command Him and therefore, He is independent (svatantaran). tasya nAma mahadyataH is another Vedic tribute which attests to Lord Narayana's supremacy. Due to His immeasurable glory, He cannot be readily perceived by mortal eyes. Thus, He is completely independent and cannot be constrained by anyone in any

manner. Another tribute of note is tvamIshvarANAm paramam maheshvaram (He is the Supreme Lord that rules over those that are called Ishvara). Thus, His independence becomes unquestionable."



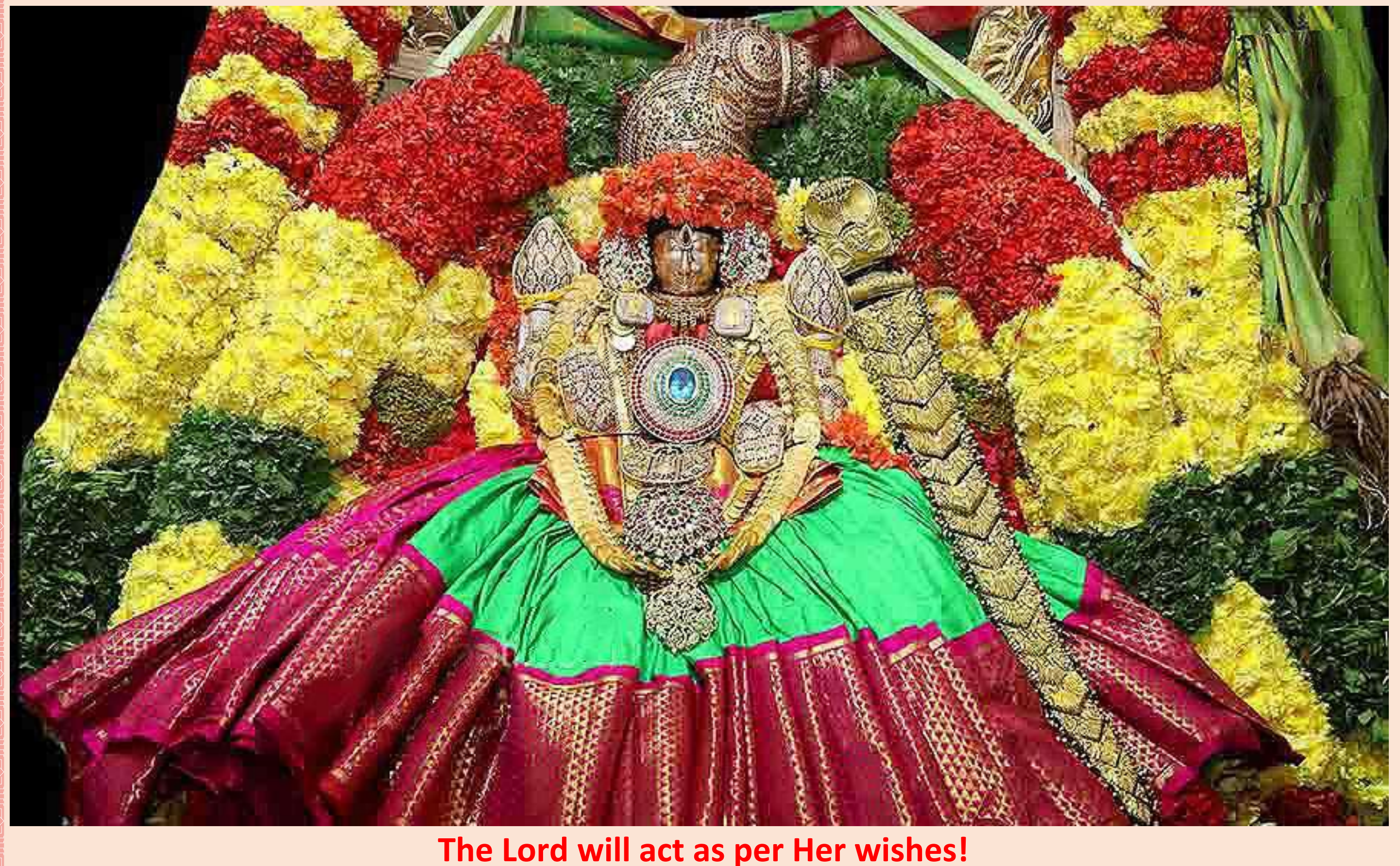
Lord Srinivasa is Paratantran for Daya Devi

Svami Desikan states in his reply "Indeed this is the considered position of the Vedam. adiyen will now present my case Oh Mother!" Svami Desikan continues "My Acharyas have stated this. Lord Narayana Himself has stated this "ayam bhakta parAdhinaH" (The Lord himself has declared that He is at the mercy of His Bhaktas and is therefore bound to do what they request of Him.). Therefore, even if the Vedam has declared Him to be Svantantaram, I daresay that Lord Srinivasa is Paratantran for Daya Devi. Not only that, He is solemnly bound by the appeal of those who have performed sharaNAgati to You, Oh Daya Devi!" In this context, it is helpful to recall Sri Kuresha's tribute to Lord Varadaraja in the Varadaraja Stavam "ananyAdhInatvaM tava kila jagurvaidikagiraH parAdhInAM tvAm tu

praNataparatantraM manumahe upalambho yaM bhoH shrayati bata sArvaj~nyamapi te yato doShaM bhakteShviha varada naivAkalayasi" (The Vedam states that the Lord is described as Ishvara who is not bound by anyone in any manner. Who is this Ishvara? None other than Lord Varadaraja. However, even those skilled in the Vedam are at a loss for determining who this Ishvara is.)

Sri Kuresha declares in another shlokam of the Varadaraja Stavam tribute "eSha Isha iti nirNayaM trayI bhAgadheyarahiteShu no dishet hastidhAmani na nirNayeta ko devarajamayamIshvarastviti" (Those unfortunate ones who have not received the Kataksham of Lord Varadaraja, even though they may have performed Veda adhyayanam taking great pains, will not be able to establish who the Ishvara is. It is important to note the purport of Sri Kuresha's tribute in the sense that the Vedam unambiguously establishes Lord Narayana as the Supreme Brahman. However, those who are not blessed with the Kataksham of Lord Narayana, even though they may intensely study the Vedas, will end up misinterpreting these important Vedam statements.) "Who then is able to establish the identity of Ishvara?" is a question that arises naturally. Sri Kuresha submits that one need not be well versed in the Vedam. However, if one worships Lord Varadaraja at Hastigiri or Lord Srinivasa in Tirumala with bhakti, they will automatically be endowed with the knowledge of the Supreme Being, Lord Narayana. In this context, Sri Kuresha states that the sacred hill Hastigiri or Venkatam hill (as glorified in the imayOr adipatiyE tribute of Svami NammAzhvar) reveal the identity of the Supreme Being. Thus, it is established on account of the hill that Lord Srinivasa is Ishvaran, the Supreme Being. The term Ishvara in the context of His overlordship of the entire universe declares Him to be independent and not subject to the command of anyone. However, Sri Kuresha avers that "parAdhInAm tvAm tu praNataparatantram manumahe" namely that the Lord does not have any independence when it comes to His Bhaktas. Instead, He is completely bound by their appeal and acts to fulfill their commands. Lord Varadaraja is quite shocked by this extreme interpretation and asks of Sri Kuresha "What? The Vedam declares Ishvara to be independent and you offer an interpretation that is completely opposed to this." Sri Kuresha answers in the affirmative and states "indeed". What is it that Lord Varadaraja did that caused Sri Kuresha to declare thus? This is answered through the observation, that Lord Narayana has taken root as the Archa murti in the Venkatam hill as Lord Srinivasa. However, He is constantly at the command of His Archakas receiving some upacharam or the other never getting even a moment's respite. Barely 10 minutes after shayanam it is time for Suprabhata sevai following which there are numerous sevais lined up in sequence

without offering the Lord a break. Thus, the Lord becomes archaka parAdhIna. Not only that, Temple administrators also do not desire to be left behind and are eager to demonstrate their influence too. Thus, the Lord becomes parAdhIna for the Temple administrators too! All the alankarams submitted by the archakas are accepted by Lord Srinivasa in the manner of Madhurakavi Azhvar's tribute "kaNNinum ciRutAmbinAl kaTTuNNa paNNiya perumAyan". Thus, He is archaka parAdhIna. Not only that He is parAdhIna to Tirumala Nambi since He has to wait for the latter to perform his teertha kaimkaryam from Akasha ganga. To demonstrate the elevated bhakti of Tirumala Nambi to the world, the Lord declares "tAta tAta (Father Father)! I am thirsty. Please bring Me water." This practice is followed to this day as the Lord awaits theertha kaimkaryam from the descendants of Tirumala Nambi for Tiruvaradhanam. Likewise, Lord Varadaraja awaits the theertham from the well offered by his kaimkaryaparas for Tiruvaradhanam. Furthermore, Sri AnanthAzhwan rendered nandavana kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. The Lord assisted Sri AnanthAzhwan every step of the way. If he was engaged in tilling the land, the Lord followed suit. If he was planting a tree, the Lord did so too. If he was digging for water, the Lord too was engaged in the same activity. Even today at the mukhadvAram of Tirumala, one can behold the gardening tools symbolizing the kaimkaryam of Sri AnanthAzhwan. This again attests to the fact that the Lord is a bhakta parAdhIna. Lord Varadaraja has taken root as the Archa murti on the elephant hill (Hastigiri). Once in Archa form the Lord becomes silent. All His messages are conveyed by His Archakas. However, Tirukacchi Nambi, who rendered Chamara Kaimkaryam (fan service) to Lord Varadaraja, enjoyed the privilege of conversation with the Lord. If the Lord engaged in this act in spite of Archa samadhi, it denotes that the Lord is bhakta parAdhIna. These are instances in recent times. If one goes further back to the vrutthAntham of the Azhvars, the life of Triumazhisai Azhvar with YathoktakAri Bhagavan in Kanchipuram illustrates His bhakta parAdhInam in a lucid manner. In the Vega Setu stotram, Swami Desikan declares "caturAnana saptatantu goptA saritaM vegavatImasau nirundhan paripuShyati mangaLani puMsAM bhagavAn bhaktimatAM yathoktakAri" (The Lord reclining at this Divya Desam confers auspiciousness to all those who come to worship Him with bhakti. In fact, He ensures an increase in the bhakti for these followers.) He is glorified as yathoktakAri - namely one who carries out the wishes of His bhaktas, bound by their bhakti. In Tamil this is described as "sonna vaNNam seyyum perumAL" (one who follows the commands of His bhaktas). This Divya Desam is the avatara sthalam of Poygai Azhvar. The beauty of the Moolavar and Utsavar at this sannadhi is captivating.



The Lord will act as per Her wishes!

Once Tirumazhisai Azhvar visited this Divya Desam. So great was the Azhvar that he would enjoy Bhagavad sAkShAtkAram (direct experience of the Lord) through yogam. The Azhvar took residence near the PushkaraNi known as Poygai kuLam and engaged in his Tapas to experience the Lord. An elderly lady, adopted the Azhvar as her guide and rendered dutiful service to him. One day upon completion of his yogam, the Azhvar beholds the elderly lady and asks her "Please let me know what you want. I shall gladly fulfill your desire." The elderly lady replied that she would like to be rid of the travails of old age and instead desired to get back her youth. The Azhvar declared "so be it". Accordingly, the elderly woman was transformed into a beautiful young lady. The king of the land, Pallavarayan, was infatuated by the beauty of this lady and desired to marry her and started living with her. Many days passed in this pursuit. The king aged greatly as a result whereas the lady's youth was preserved. He asked the lady as to how his youth can be restored. The lady informed him that there is a staunch sishya of Sri Tirumazhisai Azhvar named KaNikaNNan. If the king approached him and requested the latter to offer a song of tribute to the king, it is possible for the king to regain his youth. It must be borne in mind that Tirumazhisai Azhvar is a ParamaikAntin par excellence and so too is his devout follower KaNikaNNan. Therefore, he would not render a

song in praise of anyone else besides Lord Narayana. The king nevertheless makes the request to KaNikaNNan, who responds "mAniDam pADavanta kaviyEn allEn" (I do not render songs in praise of mere mortals). Svami Desikan too echoes the same sentiment in the Nyasa Tilakam. The king persisted in his request to KaNikaNNan. However, the latter refused this flatly on the grounds that he would only render songs of praise on Lord Narayana and his bhagavatas but not a king who demands this. Infuriated by KaNikaNNan's reply, the king ordered him to leave his kingdom. KaNikaNNan went to the shrine of YathOktakAri Perumal and offered his salutations. He then went to the PushkaraNi nearby where Sri Tirumazhisai Azhvar was engaged in yogam and tearfully submitted his prayer "Master! I have served you dutifully all these days. However, now onwards I will not have the good fortune of rendering kaimkaryam to you since the king has ordered me to leave the kingdom for refusing his persistent request to render his praise. Therefore, I have come to seek your blessings before leaving this land." The Azhcar was quite shocked to hear this and remarked "So be it. If you leave this land, I shall not stay back. I too shall go with you. Not only that when we both leave, YathOktakAri Perumal will also leave with us. He is bound to be followed by Brahma and the other Parivara Devathas." The Azhvar then rendered the Pasuram "KaNikaNNan pOkinRAn kAmarupUnkacchi maNivaNNa nI kiDakka vENDa tuNivuDaiya cenna pulavanum pOkinREn nIyum un tan painnAkap pAi suruTTikoL" (Oh Manivanna! KaNikaNNan has been ordered to leave this kingdom. I too am bound to leave due to the same reason. Now it is inappropriate for You to remain in Your reclining posture here, when it is bereft of Bhagavatas. Therefore, roll up Your serpent bed and follow us). The Lord immediately heeded this appeal and began to follow the Azhvar and kaNikaNNan. Once the Lord left the place, all the parivAra devatas followed suit, leaving behind nothing but emptiness. It was in the same manner as the trees and creepers of Ayodhya, which were yielding bountiful fruits but withered away when Lord Rama decided to leave for the forest. This is described by Valmiki Bhagavan in the Ramayanam salutation "api vR^ikShAH parimlAnaH sapuShpa ankura korakAH upataptodakA nadyaH palvalAni sarAMsi ca". In a like manner, all the parivAra devatas left Kanchipuram. Thus, it was like the Sri (wealth) of Kanchipuram leaving for residence elsewhere. Beholding this sight of a barren Kanchipuram, the king encountered enormous grief. His difficulties did not last for a day or two but seemed like an eternity. He then rushed to the shrine of YathoktakAri Bhagavan and submitted an impassioned appeal to return to His svasthAnam. However, the Lord informed the king that He would return only if the Azhvar comes back.

Accordingly, the king rushed to the Azhvar's side, full of contrition and requested the Azhvar to return to Kanchipuram. However, the Azhvar decreed that his return is possible only if his disciple kaNikaNNan decided to return. The king fell at the feet of KaNikaNNan, sought forgiveness for the apacharam, and requested his return to Kanchipuram. When KaNikaNNan relented and agreed to return to Kanchipuram, the Azhvar submitted another beautiful appeal to the Lord "KaNikaNNan pOkointAn kAmaru pUnkacchi maNivaNNA nI kiDakka vENDi tunivuDaya cennapulavan nAnum pOkointEn nIyum untan painAka pAyai virittu koL" (KaNikaNNan has decided to return. I too am following suit. Therefore, You please roll out Your serpent bed and return to Kanchipuram in Your reclining posture.) Accordingly, the Lord returned to His svasthAnam. This instance is intended to illustrate an important point. This Divya Desam is called Tiruvekka. Here the Lord is seen reclining on the serpent bed with His left hand as support. Normally, in a reclining posture, one uses the right hand for support. The visesham here is that the Lord implicitly follows the command of His Bhagavatas as evidenced by the Vegasetu stotram tribute "bhaktAnuganturiha yasya gatA gatAni". Therefore, Svami Desikan enquires of Daya Devi "Is the Lord Paratantrar or Svatantarar in light of these instances?" Another instance from the life of Tirumazhisai Azhvar becomes relevant. When he visited Tirukutantai to perform mangalasasanam, he beholds Aravamuta Perumal in His reclining posture. It occurs to the Azhvar that the Lord is enduring some discomfort causing him to break out with the tribute in his Tirucchantaviruttam "naDanta kAlkal nontavO naDunka j~nAlam EnamAi iDanta mei kulunkavO vilanku mAl varaiccuram kaDanta kal paranta kAviri karai kuDantaiyuL kiDantavaRu ezhuntiruntu pEcu vAzhi kEcanE" (In Your incarnation as Trivikrama, You measured the entire universe including the earth, and heavenly regions in two giant strides. Is the effort from this task the reason for Your fatigue and causing You to rest? During the Varaha avataram, You bore the entire earth on Your tusks. Is this the cause for Your fatigue? Now that I have sung Your praise, I see that You have some relief. Therefore, please arise from Your reclining pose and engage in conversation with me!). In response to the Azhvar's tribute, the Lord of TirukuDantai, Sri Aravamutan, is seen in a slightly raised mode as opposed to a completely flat reclining posture. He is known as AparyAptAmR^itan - namely the one that anybody never gets tired of enjoying no matter how long they enjoy Him. Thus, this is another instance of the Lord obeying the command of Tirumazhisai Azhvar. Svami Desikan reiterates his message to Daya Devi "In light of this instance please determine for Yourself if the Lord is Svatantran or Paratantran?" In the Krishna avataram, the Lord used to accompany the ladies



vyavasthAM vaiyAtyA diti vighaTayantI viharasi

of Gokulam when they proceeded to the Yamuna River to engage in snAnam. Bathing ghats are not always available near the Yamuna River. The snAna shuddhi for ladies - especially sumangalis comes about only when they apply turmeric paste to their bodies and perform snanam. Since the riverbank was replete with sand, it became impossible to make the turmeric into paste. Therefore, they used to summon Lord Krishna and ask Him to bend down. They would use His back to prepare the turmeric paste and apply it on their bodies. After they finished their bath, Krishna would return home. Yashoda would look at His back and enquire "How come Your dark form has this yellow covering on the back?" Lord Krishna replied "You were the one who sent Me as an escort for the ladies of Gokulam when they went for their bath. They could not find bathing ghats for preparing turmeric paste for their bath. Therefore, they used My back." Yashoda was deeply moved by this reply from the Lord. This is captured in the anubhavam of Periya Azhvar in PeriyAzhvAr Tirumozhi "paRRu manjal pUci pAvai mArODu pADiyil ciRRil citaittenkum tImai ceitu tiriyAmE kaRRu tULiyuDai vEDar kAniDai kanRin pin eRRukken piLLayai pokkinEn ellE pAvamE" (The instruction from Yashoda to Lord Krishna the next day is that let the ladies of Gokulam find another way to mix turmeric into paste. They should not use Your back. However, Lord Krishna disregards this instruction and accompanies the Gopikas again the next day. The Gopikas do not have any means for mixing turmeric paste and resort to Lord Krishna's back once more. The cows and calves are greatly moved by Lord Krishna's plight. On the one hand He incurs Yashoda's anger and hence her words of scolding for lending His back to the Gopikas. On the other hand, the Gopikas are unrelenting in their demand for Lord Krishna's back to prepare their turmeric paste. Therefore, at least to spare Him the scolding from Yashoda the calves and cows lick His back clean of the turmeric paste! Such is the bhakta paradhIna nature of Lord Narayana). Again, in the Mahabharata war, Lord Krishna follows the command of Arjuna as evidenced by the Bhagavadgita salutation "senayorubhayormadhye ratham sthApaya" (take my chariot to the middle of the two armies). It must be borne in mind that Arjuna regards Lord Krishna as a mere charioteer and commands the Lord to steer the chariot to various places. Is this not further proof that the Lord is ParAdhIna for Arjuna or more generally Bhakta ParAdhIna? Furthermore, the Lord has the names of ParthasArati and PANDava dUta. ParthasArati denotes the fact that He is the Charioteer of PArtha. In other words, the Lord is subservient to PArtha. However, the Lord regards this as a BhAgyam. PANDava dUta denotes the fact that the Lord was prepared to perform the most menial of services - functioning as a messenger on behalf of the Pandavas. However, the Lord regards

this as a privilege and adopts the name PANDava dUta. He is the Archa murti in a Divya Desam in Periya Kanchipuram. Here, He is in sitting posture. Despite this He is taller than the murtis of Varadaraja perumal and UlagaLanda Perumal, where He is standing and is gigantic. Each limb of the Lord starting from His nails is worthy of enjoyment at this Divya Desam. Svami Desikan enquires of Daya Devi "Oh Mother! Based on all the arguments I have advanced thus far, how could it be stated that the Lord is Svatantarar?" The manner of this Paratrantrayam needs to be examined carefully. In the MantrarAjapada Stotram, Ahirbudhnyan declares "dAsabhUtAH svatassarve hyAtmAnaH paramAtmanaH atohamapi te dAsaH iti matvA namAmyaham." (The essential nature of all Your dAsabhutas is to be subservient to You, Oh Bhagavan Nrusimha!). For such dAsabhutas, the Lord acts according to their dictates. This then raises the question whether such a status of acting as per the dictates of His Bhagavatas is "svataH siddham" (essential nature) for Bhagavan. This is answered by observing that such action on the part of Bhagavan is not svataH siddham for Him. Instead, it is His iccha (desire) on account of His own sankalpam. "paratantraH praNamatAM bhavati"- the salutation from this Daya



Satakam verse, becomes relevant thus. That is Lord Narayana, who is not subservient to anyone, acts in manner that is in conformance with the commands of His Bhagavatas. This comes about on account of His Sankalpam in keeping with the statement "sveccayaiva pareshasya sadadhinya balathunaH bhagavad bhakta sheShatavam sveccayApi kvacidbhavet". In fact, Lord Narayana considers it to be an honor to act in a subservient manner to His Bhaktas. This is reflected in Svami Desikan's NavamaNimAlai tribute "cencol anbar cintaikoNDu tItilAta tUtanAi tErum Urntu tEcuyarnta celva deiva nAyaka" (Hearing the command of His Bhagavatas, Lord Narayana acts in a manner that is in conformance with His role as a messenger. Duryodhana being aware of Lord Krishna's arrival in the court as the messenger of the Pandavas, had ordered everyone to accord no respect to the Lord. The Lord arrives like a common

messenger, conforms to all the protocols befitting a messenger, and delivers His message in the Kaurava court. Not only this, the Lord later served as the charioteer for Arjuna. By undertaking these tasks His radiance grew several fold. That is the already effulgent Lord's effulgence increased several-fold due to being Bhakta ParAdhIna).

Thus, Svami Desikan comprehensively lays out the case that the Lord is Svatantaran in all aspects other than Bhakta rakShaNam and enquires of Daya Devi "Oh Mother! Are You now convinced of my position that the Lord is Bhakta ParAdhIna? Therefore, if You make the request for protection on my behalf will the Lord not act to protect me?" This is the import of the salutation "ananyAdhInaH san bhavati paratantraH praNamatAM". The salutation "kR^ipe teShAm apakR^itim na gaNayati" from this verse is examined next. Daya Devi responds to Svami Desikan with the words "I completely accept your logical arguments. However, there is still one bothersome aspect. You have committed sins that have accumulated like a mountain from beginningless time. You continue to engage in sinful acts. You will also continue to sin in future. These are glaring violations of the Lord's commands. You engage in "akR^ityAnAm ca karaNam kR^ityAnAm varjanam" (namely you engage in all forbidden acts, while readily giving up acts that the Lord has ordered you to undertake.). How then can you expect the Lord to favor you?" Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute "kR^ipe teShAm apakR^itim na gaNayati" (The Lord does not even keep count of the numerous transgressions of a SaraNagata. This account is written off by the Lord so to speak. Hence there is nothing to worry on this count. How so? The Lord who is required to mete out punishment for these transgressions does not do so. Thereby He ignores these erroneous actions on the part of the SaraNagata). This is very similar to the treatment of preferred employees versus detested employees in the workplace. The former may routinely arrive late. However, because of his stature, this is never questioned. However, the latter is subject to numerous disciplinary actions as permitted by law. Another example is that of doting parents condoning the errant actions of their recalcitrant child. In a like manner, the Lord forgives the transgressions on the part of a SaraNagata. The use of ekavacanam denoted by "apakR^itim" in this context must be observed. This is used to depict the Lord's disposition in that no matter how grave the offences committed by the SaraNagata, Lord Narayana bundles them all up and regards them as a single trivial act. Again, Svami Desikan's careful choice of words in this context need to be observed. He does not use "na pashyati" (does not see). Instead, he describes the Lord's disposition through the statement "na gaNayati" (does not count). There is a

difference between not seeing and not counting. The latter is the Lord's disposition towards the grave offences on the part of the SaraNagata. Does this mean that the Lord is ignorant of these offences? He definitely knows that the saraNagata has committed these offences since He is known as "sarva dR^iShTa" (all observant one). The Ramayanam salutation "Na smaratyapacArANAm shatamapi atmavattaya" (Lord Rama's greatness lies in the fact that even if one has committed apacharams in the hundreds towards him, the Lord forgives such beings) becomes relevant here. In keeping with the spirit of this tribute, Lord Narayana forgives all the apacharams on the part of a SaraNagata. In the Vishnu sahasranamam, the Lord is eulogiz/ed as "avij~nAtA" (ignorant one). One may ask, with respect to what does this ignorance prevail? It is in regard to the sins committed by His SaraNagatas. This would then open up the issue that such a tribute is in contradiction to His glorification as "sarvaj~na" (all knowing one). This needs to be understood in context in that the Lord is not ignorant of the sins committed by His SaraNagatas. He is fully aware of these acts. However, the "avij~nAta" tribute comes about due to the fact that He does not punish them for these sinful acts on account of His compassionate disposition towards them. In a like manner, the Lord does not count the numerous sinful acts committed by His SaraNagatas and instead regards these offences as a single trivial item. Daya Devi accepts all of Svami Desikan's arguments in this context. She then poses a follow up question "Oh Svami! I accept all your eloquently stated arguments. However, what is the justification for Me to make the request to the Lord on your behalf. Based on what authority will the Lord accept My request?" The answer to this question lies in the tribute "patistvatpArArthyaM prathayati vR^iSha kShamAdhara patiH" Lord Srinivasa always demonstrates that He is the Paratantrar for Daya Devi. In fact, His every act is carried out at the command of Daya Devi. Daya Devi is none other than Mahalakshmi Thayar. The Lord in this instance acts in conformance with the command of Thayar. Sri Kuresha salutes this aspect of Thayar in the Sri Stavam through the eulogy "yasyA vIkShya mukhaM tadingitaparAdhIno vidhattekhilaM krIDeyaM khalu nanyathAsya rasadA syAdaikarasyAttayA" (The Lord undertakes the acts of sR^iShTi, stithi, and layam - creation, preservation and destruction of the universe. While undertaking these tasks He looks at Thayar for approval. Only upon discerning Thayar's approval from the look on Her face does the Lord proceed with His act. Thus, Lord Narayana becomes the "ingita pArAdhInaH" for Thayar.) Sri Parashara Bhattar goes a step further and states "angIkaribhiH AlOkaiH" to denote the fact that Lord Narayana engages in His act of creation and has arrived at the final stage of the process. Only if Thayar approves the act through the looks on Her eyebrows, does the act get

completed. If she disapproves, the action stops. Thus, there is no doubt that the Lord performs all actions at the command of Thayar and is thus AdhInam to Thayar. It is also helpful to recall the tribute from an earlier verse of the Daya Satakam where Svami Desikan declares "acida vishiShTAn praLaye jantUn avalokya jAta nirveda" (Daya Devi is responsible for giving sentients specific forms from their inert state during the time of praLayam). Thus, even if Lord Srinivasa grants benefits or undertakes an act, it is established beyond reasonable doubt that Daya Devi is instrumental for this. Sri Kuresha again declares in the Sri Stavam tribute "tenaitena na vismaye mahi jagannatthopi nArAyaNaH dhanyaM manyata IkShaNAttava yataH svAtmAnamAtmeshvaraH" (The Lord is His own master! He is subservient to none. However, He considers the Kataksham of Thayar upon Him to be a parama bhagyam).



Lord Srinivasa considers the Kataksham of Thayar upon Him to be a parama bhagyam

Thus, Swami Desikan addresses Daya Devi's question "Oh Mother! Based on the references quoted in this context, it is not inappropriate to conclude that Lord Narayana is Your parAdhIna. Thus, there needs to be no doubt about the success of one's SaraNagati to You and that Your subsequent recommendation to the Lord will certainly be implemented." In laukika terms, it is common practice for the lady of the house to conform to the recommendation of the man of the house. However, the opposite order has not always been accepted by traditionalists. However, at the present time this seems to be the accepted norm in most households! Thus, when it comes to the relationship between Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi, the

Lord has no qualms about implementing the recommendation of Thayar. This is out of Thayar's overbearing concern for protecting the beings of the universe. She ensures that even though they may be replete with faults, these remain hidden from view for Lord Narayana and highlights their good actions to invoke His grace. Svami Desikan further declares in the tribute "vyavasthAM vaiyAtyA diti vighaTayantI viharasi" that even if the Lord Himself wanted to alter the disposition of His paratantryam to Daya Devi, He would not be able to do this. It is helpful to recall Sri Andal's Tiruppavai salutation "untannODu uravEl namakkinku ozhikka ozhiyAtu". In the Eastern parts of India, there lived a poet named Jayadeva, who composed the AShTapati. This is quite popular in that region. This is a tribute to Radha and Lord Krishna. In one verse he states "smara-garala-khandanam, mama shirasi maNDanam dehi pada-pallavam udAram jvalati mayi dAruNo madana-kadanAnalo haratu tad upahita-vikAram, priye cArushIle" (My beloved! Offer the fresh buds of your enchanting feet as an ornament upon My head, so the devastating effect of Cupid's poison may be alleviated, and the harsh fire of amorous desires may also be relieved.) Contrast this with the prayer of the Gopikas to Lord Krishna "Our hearts must be sanctified by Your feet that have traversed the harsh terrain of the forest. This is the only way to destroy our sins." Jayadeva realizes that he has made an error in requesting Radha's feet to adorn the head of Lord Krishna. Thus, he destroys the palm leaf on which this verse was written. No matter how hard he tried to re-write this verse, the same words ended up repeating themselves. Somewhat angered by this, he decided to hold off on writing this verse and come back to it later. He then went to perform snAnam. Upon his return and completion of his daily routine, he found the palm leaf with the verse that he had destroyed. He enquired of his wife if someone had come to their house while he was engaged in snAnam and written the verse. His wife replied nobody other than him had written this. She said to him "You went out, returned, wrote this verse and went out again and returned. You forgot that you had written this verse in between your going out and coming back a couple of times." Jayadeva realizes that it is Lord Krishna who arrived when he had gone out for snAnam and authored this verse and hence decided to retain it as is. Thus, it is established from another perspective that Lord Krishna is desirous of being "RAdhA Paratantryan". Therefore, in this instance, Lord Srinivasa has no qualms about being Paraatantryan to Daya Devi. What a miracle has been brought about by Daya Devi! She has transformed Lord Srinivasa, who is declared to be Svatantran by the Vedas, to be Her Paratrantran. Furthermore, even though He is fully aware of the sinful acts committed by His SaraNagatas, He does not take cognizance of these sins and instead regards these



mama shirasi maNDanam dehi pada-pallavam priye cArushIle

as a single trivial act of error on their part. Daya Devi enjoys the anubhavam of the Lord declared to be Svatantran by the Vedas becoming the PraNata Paratantran- namely subservient to His Bhagavatas and carrying out their commands. Furthermore, Daya Devi is the reason for the Lord, who is known as sarva dR^iShTA, to ignore the sins committed by His SharaNagatas. The Lord is SarvasheShi - master of the entire universe. However, Daya Devi transforms Him to become Her sheShan (one who follows Daya Devi's command). This transformation of the Lord totally opposed to the conventional norm, is accomplished by Daya Devi as a matter of an act of sport. Thus, Svami Desikan concludes his submission to Daya Devi in this verse with a request for protection "Oh Mother Daya Devi! There is nothing that is impossible for You to accomplish. Since I have performed SaraNagati to You, it becomes Your duty to protect me. As I have outlined here, the Lord functions as Your Paratantrayan. Therefore, Your recommendation on my behalf will undoubtedly be implemented by Him." Thus, those of us who have performed SaraNagati to Daya Devi can rest assured of the Lord's protection. In fact, due to this SaraNagati, we acquire the status of queens, that gain priority when it comes to receiving the anugraham of the Lord. We conclude this exposition with a prayerful request to Lord Srinivasa, Daya Devi, and Svami Desikan for growth of Bhakti towards them, increase in Bhagavad Kaimkarya ruchi and Kaimkaryam growth for Svami Desikan. "

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili PatracharIar Svamin:

"Lord Srinivasa of Vrishadri is a super-master. He can never be subservient to anyone, but actually He makes Himself obedient and to be ordered about, in respect of those who chose the Prapatti path. Furthermore, He is reputed as omniscient and all-perceiving. However, He does not reckon the offence of Prapannas. Oh Daya Devi! Your consort proclaims that He bears Paratantryam to You. So much so, You loudly and proudly announce a reconciled situation, namely reversed relationship of Paratantryam between the Lord and Prapannas/Yourself, which is virtually impossible to bring about. You do this as an act of sport.

1. It is well known that the Lord is the inner soul to all beings. However, in the Bhagavadgita, He declares the j~nAni to be His soul.

2. He is the sheShi to the entire universe but is sheShan to Daya Devi."

Slokam 64

अपां पत्युः शत्रूनसहन मुनेर्धर्म निगळं
कृपे काकस्यैकं हितमिति हिनस्ति स्म नयनम्।
विलीन स्वातन्त्र्यो वृषगिरि पतिस्त्वद्विहृतिभिः
दिशत्येवं देवो जनित सुगतिं दण्डन गतिम्॥ ६४॥

ApAM patyuH shatrUnasahana munerdharma nigalaM
kR^ipe kAkasyaikaM hitamiti hinasti sma nayanam|
villna svAtantryo vR^iShagiri patistvat vihR^itibhiH
dishatyevaM devo janita sugatiM daNDana gatim||64





We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now begin the elaboration of verse 64 which is "ApAM patyuH shatrUnasahana munerdharma nigalaM kR^ipe kAkasyaikaM hitamiti hinasti sma nayanam villna svAtantryo vR^iShagiri patistvat vihR^itibhiH dishatyevaM devo janita sugatiM daNDana gatim" This is a beautiful verse. Svami Desikan continues his glorification of Daya Devi. In the previous verse, Lord Srinivasa, who is declared to be Svatantran by the Vedam, out of His own desire, becomes Paratantran to His Bhagavatas, Sharangatas and Daya Devi. Furthermore, even though He is the all-knowing one and thus is fully aware of the sinful acts on the part of Sharanagatas, He does not highlight these flaws and mete out punishment. Instead, out of compassion, He bundles up these offences into a single trivial act and ignores them. All of this comes about on account of His being

Paratantran for Daya Devi. Thus, the glory of Daya Devi exceeds even that of Lord Srinivasa. Next, when it comes to vyapara karyams of sR^iShTi (creation), stithi (preservation), and layam (dissolution), the Lord undertakes them in accordance with the accumulated karma for each individual being. For those with good karma, the Lord confers a noble birth. For those who have sinned greatly, He confers birth in a pApa yoni consigning them to have an inherent disposition to commit sins. Likewise, in accordance with the wrongful acts committed by these beings, Lord Srinivasa metes out appropriate punishment. Even these acts of punishment, on account of Daya Devi's intervention, ultimately results in something good for these beings. The tribute "ApAM patyuH shatrUnasahana munerdharma nigalaM kR^ipe kAkasyaikaM hitamiti hinasti sma nayanam" reflects the fact that "Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa acts in accordance with a sport that You engage in (as evidenced in the "tvat vihR^itibhiH" salutation). Consequently, even His apparent acts of punishment result in the ultimate good for those who are punished. This comes about on account of an act of sport in keeping with Svami NammAzhvar's words of praise "alli malar bhogayarkaLAlE"". Due to Her Leela, the Lord alters His intent so to speak. We have sinned gravely. This is not over one or two days but over countless lifetimes. The extent of these sins is also quite vast. If one has sinned, one needs to endure the consequences for these sins. In Tamil there is a saying "uppu sAppiTTavan tIrtham kuDicchuthAn AkaNum" (one who has partaken of salt necessarily needs to drink water). However, our sin-pile is so great and mountainous that by the time we endure the consequences time itself will run out as documented in verse 34 of the Daya Satakam. Thus, despite having sinned greatly, there is protection for us. How does this come about? This is the crux of the matter and is addressed in this verse. Once a being has performed Sharanagati to Lord Srinivasa, it should not be construed that the jivan has accomplished a great task as a consequence of which moksham is attained. Instead, Svami Desikan instructs us that the correct perspective is that Lord Srinivasa treats the act of Sharanagati as an excuse to invoke His grace, which results in the benefit of moksham for the jivan. The role of Daya Devi in this context is important to note. Specifically, She ensures that Lord Srinivasa, who is greatly angered by the sins committed by the jivan and resolves to mete out punishment, is appeased and even the punishment from the Lord results in the well-being for the jivan. Another important capsule of wisdom embedded in this verse is that it is not possible to perform Sharanagati easily. For this one requires jAyamAna kATakSham, Ishvara

sauhArdam, adveSham, abhimukhyam to perform some AnukUlyam to please the Lord, yAdR^icChika puNyam, and finally, sAdhu sambhAShaNam. These come about on account of Daya Devi. Sri Kuresha declares in the Varadaraja Sthavam, "Varada! tava khalu prasAdAdR^ite sharaNamiti vacopi me nodiyAt tvamasi mayi tataH prasAdonmukhaH" (If I did not have the anugraham of Daya Devi I would never be able to utter the words "I surrender to You for my upliftment". Let there be no doubt that this utterance comes about entirely on account of Your Daya.) Svami Desikan too echoes this sentiment in the NyAsa dashakam salutations "ahaM madrakShaNabharo madrakShaNa phalam tathA na mama shrIpaterevetyAtmAnaM nikShipet budhaH" and "mAM madIyaM ca nikhilaM cetanAcetanAtmakam sva kaInkaryopa karaNaM varada svIkuru svayam". Those who resort to Lord Narayana in this mode are assured of ultimate good on account of Daya Devi. In short, She alone is capable of transforming Bhagavad nigraham (punishment) into anugraham (blessing). One may reason "Is this even possible? Some one that has sinned greatly is accorded punishment in keeping with their offence. How then does this lead to something good?" In this verse, Svami Desikan quotes three specific instances from the RamayaNam to make the point. The first among them is "ApAM patyuH shatrUn" (ApAM patiH denotes the king of the body of water or Samudra Raja). This Samudra Raja was graced by Lord Rama. How so? A closer examination of the Lord's encounter with Samudra Raja is in order. Valmiki Bhagavan is not known as Adikavi for nothing. His usage of words is appropriate, simple, and easy to understand for a mere child that is



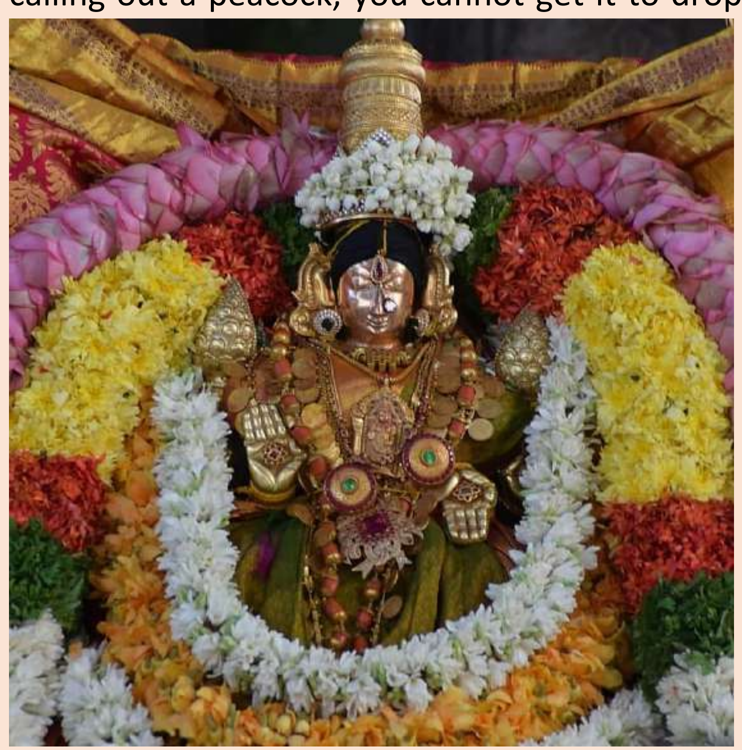


unskilled in the nuances of Samskritam. The Ramayanam is replete with such usages. Specifically, the Lord accepted Vibhishana's sharanagati after consulting other leaders and commoners in the Vanara army, although He had decided before hand in accordance with His statement "Anaya enam hari shreShTha dattam asya abhayam mayA". This was done in order to overcome all opposition by the Vanaras to the acceptance of Vibhishana and to ensure that he can be afforded a prominent role in the war against Ravana. Once He accorded this prominent status to Vibhishana, Lord Rama addresses the entire Vanara army "We have now arrived at the shores of the sea. How do we cross the ocean and reach Lanka? This is no mean feat since the ocean is replete with tidal waves, which seem to crest higher and higher. The ocean is also vast. Thus, crossing the ocean is no small matter." One possibility would be to confer with Hanuman due to his prior experience. However, this was accomplished once by Hanuman using his individual strength. However, in this instance the entire Vanara Army needs to cross the ocean and not all of them are endowed with Hanuman's strength. After careful consideration, Lord Rama addressed Vibhishana with the statement "sainaiH parivR^itAH sarve vAnarANAm mahAjasAm upAyair abhigaccAmo yathA nada nadI patim tarAma tarasA sarve sasainyA varuNa Alayam" "evam uktastu dharmaj~naH pratyuvAca vibhIShaNaH" (The Lord addressed Vibhishana thus: Please suggest a means for the entire Vanara army to cross the ocean and reach Lanka. This is not a case of one or two of us crossing the ocean.

Instead, all the vanaras in the army need to get to the other side.) Vibhishana replied through the salutation "samudram rAghavo rAjA sharaNam gantum arhasi" (If you undertake a sharanagati to Samudhra Raja, this mission will be accomplished). Lord Rama decreed "vibhIShaNasya mantro ayam mama lakShmaNa rocate sugrIvaH paNDito nityam bhavAn mantra vicakShaNaH" Lord Rama's words illustrate an important point. Superficial meaning of this verse is "I think it is appropriate to undertake the sharanagati for Samudhra Raja as suggested by Vibhishana." Deeper analysis surfaces an important question. Lord Rama is the emperor of the entire universe. Is it appropriate for Him to perform sharanagati to Samudhra Raja? The response to this question is found from the statement of Lord Rama Himself. If the sharanagati is performed for His own personal benefit, then the question becomes relevant.

However, when it is intended for the well-being of the entire universe, there is nothing wrong in performing sharanagati to anyone. It must be borne in mind that Lakshmana detests the meek approach of seeking any favors from anyone. Instead, he believes that Lord Rama should command all He Lords over to perform the demanded tasks. Therefore, it is instructive to note that in the first part of this Ramayanam verse, Lord Rama states "satkriyA artham kriya dakShaH smita pUrvam sambhAShita" (Oh Lakshmana even if this sounds unpleasant to you, there is nothing wrong with adopting the approach of Sharanagati to Samudhra Raja as outlined by Vibhishana). Due to this act of Lord Rama, even today we have the bhagyam of darshanam of Lord Rama as Darbha shayanar at the Divya desham of TirupullANi. This is described in the Ramayanam salutation "tataH sAgaravelAyAm darbhAnAstIrya rAghavaH anjalim prA~ngmukhaH kR^itvA pratishishye mahodadheH". This needs to be understood in the context of the subsequent Ramayanam verses, where Valmiki Bhagavan writes "bAhum bhuja~nga bhogAbham upadhAyArisUdanaH, jAtarUpamayaishchaiva bhUShaNair bhUShitam purA", "maNikAncanakeyUramuktApravarabhUShaNaiH, bhujaiH parama nArINAm bhimRiSHTamanekadhA", "candanAgurubhishcaiva purutAdabhisevitam bAlasUryaprakAshaishca candanairupashobhitam" (Lord Rama's shoulders had numerous ornaments. Furthermore, this was the resting place for Sita Devi. Now the Lord uses the same arms to rest on the plain ground). Another verse from the Ramayanam becomes important here "asyatA ca punaH savyam jyAghAtavigatatvacam dakShiNo kakShiNam bahum mahApAraghasAmnabham

gosahasrapradAtAran hyupadhAya bhujam mahat adya me manaNam vAtha taraNam sAgarasya vA" (The hand has performed numerous gift-giving of cows, is now resting on the barren ground as support for Lord Rama's head). This greatly pains Valmiki Maharishi. Lord Rama, an emperor, is sleeping on the bare ground by the sea-shore engaged in prayer to Samudhra Raja to make way for His army to cross over to Lanka. Lord Rama resolves that either He will cross the ocean or else something grave will befall Him. However, despite remaining on fast for three days and not even partaking of water, Samudhra Raja did not relent and accede to Lord Rama's request. This greatly angered Lord Rama, who declared "sarvatra utsR^iShTa daNDam ca lokaH sat kurute naram na sAmnA shakyate kIrtir na sAmnA shakyate yashaH" "prAptum lakShmaNa loke asmin jayo vA raNa mUdhani" In Tamil an equivalent saying is that "mayilE mayilEnnu sonnA iraku pODAtu" (namely by calling out a peacock, you cannot get it to drop a single feather. Only when held



and grabbed can one get the peacock feather). Lord Rama continues "Likewise, it was a grave mistake on My part to engage in prayers for Samudhra Raja. Those who are bereft of any strength or fame think no end of themselves. One cannot approach them in a pleasant manner for any help. Thus one has to resort to forceful means" This is captured in the Ramayanam salutation "sa darshayati sAmnA me sAgaro rUpamAtmanaH" (When I approached Samudhra Raja respectfully through prayer, he did not heed My request. Now I have no other recourse but to use force.) The Lord then declares "cApam Anaya saumitre sharAmaH ca AshI viSha upamAn samudram shoShayiShyAmi padbhyAm yAntu plava~ngamAH" (Lakshmana! Bring Me My bow. With a single arrow, I shall dry up the ocean and transform it into a sand bed on which the entire Vanara army can cross over to Lanka by walking). Lakshmana is delighted to hear these words from Lord Rama and informed Rama "I am very

pleased to hear You speak thus. When You embarked on the prayerful submission to Samudhra Raja, I remained silent out of respect and due to the fact that I did not want to dissuade You from undertaking a noble task. But now I shall gladly bring You Your bow." While mounting the arrow on his bowstring Lord Rama utters the statement "adya akShobhyam api kruddhaH shoShayiShyAmi sAgaram sapAtAlam mahArNava sharanirdagdha to yasya parishuShkasya sAgara" (I shall ensure that there is no trace of the ocean. Even if the ocean seeks refuge in the nether region, I shall ensure that there will be no water there.) Just the words of Lord Rama with His arrow ready for release caused the ocean waters to start boiling. The creatures residing in the ocean were in a state of panic. The nakshatrams and residents of the upper regions were aghast at the thought of the unmitigated catastrophe that could potentially come about due to Lord Rama's anger. Samudhra Raja surfaced then and came before Lord Rama. It is instructive to reproduce Valmiki Bhagavan's matchless description of this instance in the Ramayanam salutation "ga~ngasindhupradhAnAbhirApagAbhiH samAvR^itaH" (Samudhra Raja was scared to appear alone. Therefore, he appeared as the the Lord of Ganga and Sindhu, Yamuna and the like. These rivers are feminine. Samudhra Raja is the consort of these ladies so to speak). It is precisely to mirror the Valmiki Ramayanan salutation that Svami Desikan uses the tribute "ApAM patyuH shatrUn" in this Daya Satakam verse. Samudhra Raja then submits his prayer to Lord Rama "Oh Lord! Your anger towards me is incomprehensible. My conduct is entirely in keeping with Your sR^iShTi (creation)." Again, the appeal of Samudhra Raja from the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation is quoted "sAgaraH samatikramya pUrvam Amantrya vIryavAn", "abravIt prAnjalir vAkyam rAghavam shara pANinam pR^ithivi vayur AkAsham Apo jyotiH ca rAghavaH", "svabhAve saumya tiShThanti shAshvatam mArgam AshritAH" (Beholding Lord Rama with bow in hand Samudhra Raja submitted his prayer that the earth, wind, sky, water, light, are all in existence in accordance with their essential nature. For example, the fire is hot. If it does not burn anything that it comes in contact with, that would be contrary to its essential nature. There would have to be a compelling reason for this. Even the fire that did not harm Anjaneya, was due to the prayer of Sita Piratti. Similarly, each object of Your creation remains true to its essential nature. In this instance, my essential nature is to run deep and not to let anyone cross over. Thus, I acted in conformance with this fact.) This is reflected in the Ramayanam salutation "tat svabhAvo mama api eSha yad agAdho aham aplavaH" (My essential nature is to run deep and remain

vast not allowing anyone to cross over. Thus, I am acting in conformance with this fact. Thus, my intention is not to remain unhelpful to You but to merely act in accordance with Your prescribed role for me. When this is the case, is Your anger against me justified? I will definitely help You and ensure that the entire Vanara army is able to safely cross over to Lanka. None of the whales or alligators in the ocean will harm them. However, please do not use Your arrow against me.) Lord Rama responds to this prayer with the statement "harINAm taraNo rAma kariShyAmi yathAsthalam tamabravIttadA rAmaH shruNu me varuNAlaya", "amogho(a)yam mahAbAnaH kasmin deshe nipAtyatAm" (I accept Your submission. However, this arrow mounted on My bowstring cannot be wasted. It has to be used. Where can I aim this?) To this, Samudhra Raja replies "drumakulya iti khyAto loke khyAto yathA bhavAn ugradarshanakarmANo bahavastatra dasyavaH", "abhIrapramukhAH pApAH pibanti salilam mamatairna tatsparshanam pApam saheyam pApakarmabhiH" (I have a few enemies. There is place known as Drumakulya which is inhabited by people engaged in extremely sinful acts. They make use of my water for all prohibited purposes and thus cause me untold harassment. Please aim Your arrow at these inhabitants and rid me of their menace.) Accordingly, Lord Rama aimed His arrow at these beings and rid Samudhra Raja of his trouble. This is captured in the Daya Satakam salutation "ApAM patyuH". Thus, Lord Rama, who intended to punish Samudhra Raja for his perceived recalcitrance in coming to His help, ended up exterminating the enemies of Samudhra Raja. This is the visesham here. A similar instance can be found in the Krishna avataram too. The poisonous snake Kalinga had contaminated the Yamuna water with venom resulting in the death of numerous innocent victims that unknowingly drank the water. Lord Krishna was quite outraged by this act of Kalinga and decided to punish the serpent. Beholding the ferocity of Lord Krishna's dance

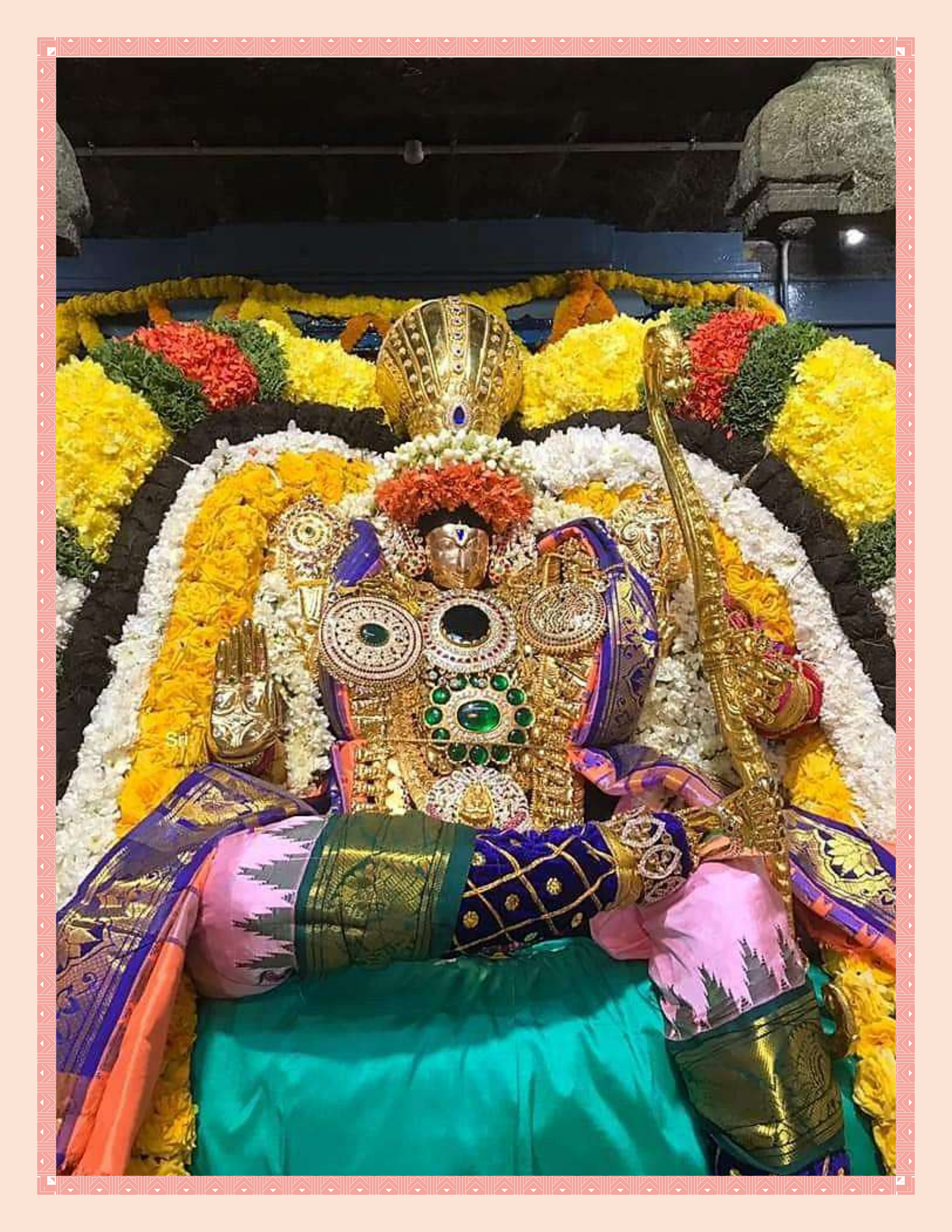


on the hoods of Kalinga and blood oozing out of them, the wives of Kalinga perform sharanagati to Lord Krishna for protection of their mAngalyam. Their appeal to Lord Krishna was "Please do not kill Kalinga. This will result in the loss of sumangali status for us and confer upon us widowhood. Therefore, please spare his life." The same intent is conveyed by Samudhra Raja by appearing before Lord Rama with all the nadhis. The inner meaning is that "By aiming Your arrow on me, You will confer widowhood upon these rivers. Therefore, please do not engage in this act". Kalinga too submits an appeal to Lord Krishna similar in spirit to Samudhra Raja "I am incapable of glorifying You. However, I want to bring an important point to Your attention. All beings in the universe are created by You and act in accordance with their essential nature again bestowed upon them by You. In this instance, You created me as a snake and endowed me with poison, which I had been spreading. Now, angered by this fact, You want to exterminate me. Is this appropriate?" Lord Krishna responds to this with the statement "There is an appropriate place for using this venom. Instead, You used this against innocent Sadhus, who were engaged in austerities. That is the mistake for which I had to punish you." Here too it must be noted that although Lord Krishna seemingly meted out punishment to Kalinga by dancing on his hoods, He provided a great anugraham to the serpent, namely blessing the serpent's hoods with the touch of His feet. Additionally, it must be noted that while Lord Krishna destroyed numerous asuras, heeding the appeal of the wives of Kalinga, He spared the serpent's life and instructed the serpent to leave the precincts of lake that was inhabited by the serpent." This transformation of a seemingly punitive act (dandana gatim) on the part of the Lord into a great blessing (sugatim) is undoubtedly the work of Daya Devi as described by Svami Desikan in this verse. Sri Kuresha glorifies the Lord in the AthimAnuSha sthavam as "ha janmatAsu sikatAsu mayA na labdhaM rAse tvayA virahitAH kila gopakanyAH yAstAvakInapadapa~nktijuShojuShanta nikShipya tatra nijama~nga mana~nga taptam" (Once during the performance of RasAkrida, You disappeared from view. The Gopikas were unable to bear the separation from You and were literally scorched by the heat arising from this separation. They rid themselves of their plight by rolling in the sand of the Yamuna river-bank, which was blessed by the touch of Your feet. How I wish I was a grain of that sand sanctified by Your lotus feet!) Thus, Lord Rama, who was subjected to a three day fast without water and an unrelenting attitude by Samudhara Raja who was clearly deserving of punishment was instead graced by Lord Rama with the destruction of his enemies.

The cause for this transformation on the part of Lord Rama is undoubtedly Daya Devi. The next instance of such a transformation is described in the Daya Satakam tribute "asahana munerdharma nigalaM". In this context asahanam denotes jealousy. Here the reference is to muni Parashurama. This is again an instance from the Ramayanam. Upon completion of the marriage ceremony of Lord Rama, Dasharatha, the princes of Ayodhya along with their entire retinue embarked upon their return to Ayodhya from Mithila. At this juncture, Parashurama of matchless radiance arrives before them. His radiance is described in the Valmiki Ramayanam salutations "jvalantamiva tejobhiH durnirIkShyam pR^ithaj janaiH" "tam dR^iShTvA bhIma samkAsham jvalantam iva pAvakam" (Parashurama's radiance was like that of the raging fire at the end of time - kAlAgni. This is quite blinding and cannot be seen with bare eyes.) The Ramayanam salutation "vasiShTha pramukhA viprA japa homa parAyaNAH" reflects the worry of everyone in the retinue (Vasishta, who had distinguished himself as the foremost among those who had undertaken, Tapas, and other austerities was wondering in a grave manner "Parashurama has arrived. What is he going to do next?") Others too in the retinue are left wondering "Here comes Parashurama, the sworn



enemy of Kshatriyas! What harm is going to befall us now?” Neverthelss, the Rishis in the gathering welcome Parashurama with sweet words as reflected by the Ramayanam tribute “R^iShayo rAma rAma iti madhuram vAkyam abruvan”. However, Parashurama, disregarding these words of welcome from the Rishis, directly comes in front of Lord Rama and addresses him through the salutation from the Valmiki Ramayanam “rAma dAsharathe vIra vIryam te shrUyate adbhutam dhanuSho bhedanam caiva nikhilena mayA shrutam tat adbhutam acintyam ca bhedanam dhanuShaH tathA” (Oh Rama, son of Dasharatha! I have heard that You are hailed as one of great valor in the world due to breaking the bow of Shiva.). He then continued through the statement “tat idam ghora sankAsham jAmadagnyam mahat dhanuH pUrayasva shreNa eva sva balam darshayasva ca” (This is the bow of Vishnu that I have in my possession. Demonstrate Your valor to me by stringing this bow.) It must be noted that Parashurama as an avataram had a purpose that had been served well before his encounter with Lord Rama. Thus, he was leading the life of a BrahmaNa rishi at this time. It is also helpful to recall Svami Desikan’s mahAvIra vaibhavam tribute “shatakoTi shataguNa kaThina parashudhara munivara karadhR^ita duravanamatama nija dhanurAkarShaNa prakAshita pArameShThya” (Lord Rama revealed that He was the Supreme Being by effortlessly stringing the bow of Parashurama and mounting an arrow.) Meanwhile the encounter between Parashurama and Lord Rama is being observed with great trepidation by Dasharatha and others in the retinue. It may be recalled that Parashurama exterminated twenty-one generations of the kshatriya clan due to the fact that one kshatriya killed Jamadagni (Parashurama’s father), while Parashurama was away performing Tapas. Thus, his anger was somewhat satiated, and he had come to tolerate kshatriyas. However, what he could not bear was the fact that the universe was celebrating Lord Rama as the matchless warrior due to His heroic exploits. This was a case, of pure jealousy on the part of Bhargava Rama. The Lord can never tolerate those who bear envy towards Him. A related upadesham from the Bhagavadgita Chapter 18 is worth recalling here. “idam te nAtapaskAya nAbhaktAya kadAcana na cAshushrUShave vAcyam na ca mAm yobhyasUyati” (The concept of sharaNagati elucidated upon in the charama shlokam, Bhagavadgita 18.66, should not be explained to one who is devoid of austerity, who lacks Bhakti, who does not wish to hear it, or is envious of Me.) In chapter 3 of the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna further elaborates upon those who bear envy towards Him through the verse “ye tvetad abhyasUyanto nAnutiShThanti me matam sarva-j~nAna-



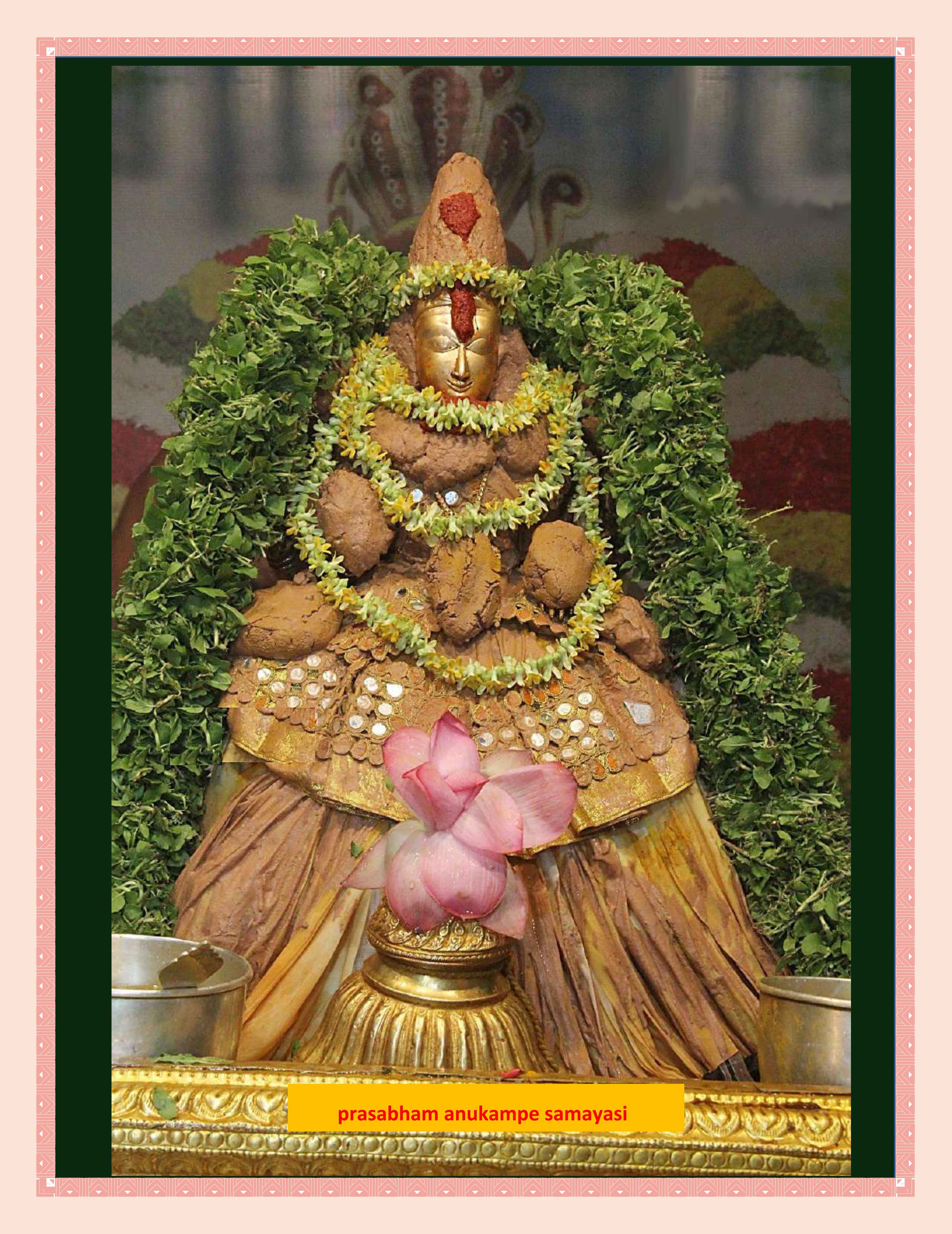
vimUDhAns tAn viddhi naShTAn achetasaH” (Those who bear envy towards Me, those who cannot stand to hear My glory, they are verily fools who do not possess even an ounce of knowledge. They are truly the nashta prayas - they bring about their own ruin since they cannot bear to hear My instruction.) It is important to have this background while discussing Lord Rama’s demeanor towards Parashurama. Normally, Lord Rama would prostrate before any Brahmin that arrived in His presence. Given Parashurama’s distinction and tejas, there would be no question about this. However, since Parashurama was envious of Lord Rama being universally celebrated for His unmatched valor, Lord Rama did not salute him and welcome him in His traditional manner. Instead, Lord Rama acted simply as per the command of Parashurama in this instance by requesting him for the bow, stringing it, and mounting an arrow. He then addressed Parashurama as documented in the Ramayanam tribute “vIrya hInam iva ashaktam kShatra dharmeNa bhArgava avajAnAsi me tejaH pashya me adya parAkramam” (Oh Bhargava! You considered Me bereft of valor and a powerless common kshatriya. However, now behold My strength.) This is expounded upon further in the Ramayanam tribute “Aropya sa dhanU rAmaH sharam sajyam cakAra ha jAmadagnyam tato rAmam rAmaH kruddho abravIt idam” (rAma received the bow from Parashurama, strung it and



placed the arrow.) Beholding Parashurama's eyes red with anger, Lord Rama addresses him through the verse "brAhmaNo asi iti pUjyo me vishvAmitra kR^itena ca tasmAt shakto na te rAma moktum prANa haram sharam" (Since you are a Brahmana, I do not wish to use this arrow on you for this arrow is sure to claim your life. That too because I have been instructed about you by Vishvamithra. What do I do now?) This is also the import of the tribute from this verse of the Daya Satakam "asahana munerdharma nigalaM". Parashurama addresses Lord Rama contritely and states "I have understood that You are the supreme being. This arrow that You have mounted on the bow will not go waste." Lord Rama enquires "How so?" Parashurama states "I have accumulated a lot of puNyam through countless years of penance. Please use this arrow to destroy all the accumulated puNyam". This is described in the Valmiki Ramayanam verse "lokAH tu apratimA rAma nirjitAH tapasA mayA jahi tAn shara mukhyena mAbhUt kAlasya paryayaH" The import of these RamayaNam verses pertaining to Lord Rama's encounter with Parashurama is captured in the tribute "asahana munerdharma nigalaM" of this Daya Satakam verse. This gives rise to an important question. Certainly, benefit accrues when one's sins are destroyed. However, what is gained by destruction of one's puNyam? This is a sUkShma vishayam (hidden import). It must be borne in mind that with respect to attaining Lord Narayana both puNyam and pApam are deterrents. Accumulation of puNyam results in several material (aihika) benefits. This causes one to engage in their enjoyment to the detriment of several Bhagavad kaimkaryam opportunities. Similarly, pApam gives rise to grief on account of which one is unable to take part in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Here, Lord Rama only wished the very best for Parashurama. While destroying his puNyam (dharma nigaLam), Lord Rama ensured that his ultimate well-being came about. It is important to note Svami Desikan's Mahaveera Vaibhavam tribute "kratuhara shikharikantuka vihR^ityunmukha jagadaruntudha jitahari danti danta dantura dashavadana damanakushala dashashatabhuja mukha nR^ipatikula rudhira jhara bharitha pR^itutara taTAka tarpita pitR^ika bhR^igupati sugati vihatikara natha paruDiShu parigha" Here Svami Desikan declares that Bhargava Rama attained a good state on account of Lord Rama (bhR^igupati sugati vihatikara). Another important reference in this context is Svami Desikan's tribute to Lord Varadaraja in the Varadaraja Panchasat.



Pleased with Svami Desikan's tribute, Lord Varadaraja is prepared to grant him the status of Brahma, Indra, Rudra and the like. However, Svami Desikan declines this offer through the declaration "Lord Varadaraja! Those who are Your true devotees regard the status of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra as impediments to nitya divya bhagavad svarUpa anubhavam. Therefore these are verily like one who wants to be free, being confined to a prison with golden shackles. Therefore, these are of no use to me." (tvayi baddha bhAvAH paitAmahAdiShu padeShvapi bhAva bandham kasmai svadeta sukhasancharaNotsukAya kAragR^ihe kanakashR^i~nkhalayApi bandhaH). Thus, it is established by Svami Desikan that even puNyam is an obstacle to paripUrNa Brahma Ananda anubhavam. Sri Kuresha, who rendered himself blind, unable to bear the cruelty of the Chola King Krimikanta Chola towards Svami Bhashyakarar, later on had his vision restored at the Shrine of Lord Varadaraja in the presence of his Acharya, Svami Bhashyakarar. In the same vein as Svami Desikan, Sri Kuresha declares "This vision is good for gaining a darshanam of Lord Varadaraja or to have the darshanam of my Acharyan. However, if this is used for anything else it is a hindrance. Therefore, I desire to be blind". This is reflected in the Varadaraja Sthavam tribute "yadi na bhavati tat pradehi prabho jhaTiti vitara pAdamevAnyathA" (Oh Lord Varadaraja, I absolutely do not desire any benefit that will come in the way of securing Your uninterrupted blessing. I only desire those things which aid in getting Your unceasing anugraham.) Thus, it is established that even puNyam is an impediment to enjoyment of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam. Therefore, with respect to Parashurama, who was envious of the Lord's valor, Lord Rama relieved him of this impediment, which was for his ultimate good. This completes the elaboration on the second instance quoted by Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse. The final instance in this verse pertains to Kakasura's encounter with Lord Rama. Svami Desikan's tribute in this verse for this instance is "krupE kAkasyaIkam hithamihithinasthismanayanam". The anvaya kramam (prose order) for this salutation is "kR^ipe kAkasyaikaM nayanam hitamiti sma" (Oh Daya Devi! You took away one eye for Kakasura out of consideration of "hitamitisma"-the well-being of Kakasura). This last tribute is really central to Svami Desikan's point of ultimate good coming about from punishment. In the first instance, it can be viewed as the Lord not doing anything extraordinary by exterminating the enemies of Samudhra Raja. His essential nature is to run deep and not to allow anyone to cross. Thus, Samudhra Raja did not commit a grave sin by not altering his inherent nature. Due to Lord Rama's command, he altered his


prasabham anukampe samayasi

essential nature and allowed the Vanara army to cross. Thus, Lord Rama's grace for him is not a significant act. Parashurama too was an incarnation of Lord Narayana until he completed the purpose of his avataram. Therefore, Lord Rama ridding him of his puNyam too in view of his envy of the Lord's manner need not count as a significant act. However, Lord Rama's grace for Kakasura is significant. Kakasura committed grave apacharam towards Sita Devi. He was deserving of the death penalty for this offence. However, even for him the Lord demonstrated compassion. This is indeed extraordinary. In fact, the opening verse of Srimad AbhayapradhAna sAram by Svami Desikan while discussing the Kakasura SaraNagati reveals this "cOkam tavirkkum curuthi poruL onRu collukinROm nAkam tanakkum irAkkatharkkum namakkum sharaNAm AkaNDalan mahanAkiya AvalippERiyatOr kAkam pizhaitthiDa kaNNazhivE ceita kAkutthanE". It must be borne in mind that this episode took place, while Lord Rama resided in Chitrakuta. However, it is not documented in the AraNya Khandam of the Valmiki Ramayanam. Instead, it is revealed by Sita Devi to Anjaneya in the Sundara Khandam for proof positive of sighting Sita Devi and conveying an incident that was known only to Lord Rama and Her. Sita Devi elaborates to Anjaneya "Oh Hanuman! This is an instance which only Lord Rama and I are aware of and no other. May your narration of this episode to Lord Rama serve as proof that you have indeed seen and conversed with Me. One time during our residence in the Ashramam at the Chitrakuta hill, Lord Rama was resting on My lap. At that time Kakasura pecked at My bosom out of his desire for partaking of My flesh causing blood to ooze. This is captured in the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation "tato mAmsa samAyukto vAyasaH paryatuNDayat tam aham loShTam udyamya vArayAmi sma vAyasam". I did not want to disturb the Lord in His sleep and thus tried to scare the crow by throwing stones and the like. However, this could not deter Kakasura. This is captured in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "dArayan sa ca mAm kAkaH tatra eva parilIyate". We would take turns at resting. When I was tired I would rest on Lord Rama's lap and while He was tired He would lie down on My lap. This is captured in the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation "paryAyeNa prasuptashca mamA~nke bharatAgrajaH". Awakened by the flow of My blood Lord Rama saw what happened and was greatly angered as documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam verse "sa mAm dR^iShTvA mahAbAhurvitunnAm stanayostadA AshI viSha iva kruddhaH shvasAn vAkyam abhAShathAH" (Lord Rama angrily enquires who was the cause of this distress to Sita Devi and beholds the culprit, Kakasura).



It may be noted that Sita Devi did not point out Kakasura to Lord Rama in keeping with Her essential nature documented in the Yatiraja Saptati salutation "anugrahamayIm vande nityam aj~nAta nigrahAm" (Salutations to Thayar in whose dictionary the word punishment does not exist.). Therefore, She only had the well-being of Kakasura in mind and thus did not point the Lord in his direction to spare him from punishment arising from Lord Rama's anger. Using a blade of grass Lord Rama invoked the BrahmAstra. This is evidenced in the Ramayanam salutation "sa dharbha sanstarAt gR^ihya brahmaNo astreNa yojyaH" The BrahmAstra relentlessly pursued Kakasura wherever he went. Finally realizing the futility of his efforts to seek refuge with Brahma, Shiva, and Indra, Kakasura surrendered to Lord Rama's feet as described in the Ramayanam tribute "trIn lokAn samparikramya tvAm eva sharaNam gataH sa pitrA ca parityaktaH suraiH sarvaiH maharShibhiH" Kakasura's sharanagati is eloquently described in Svami Alavandar's Stotraratnam salutation "praNata iti dayALuryacca caidyasya kR^iShNa" (The surrender was not a genuine surrender in the sense of seeking out the Lord for protection. However, realizing that he had no other recourse, he resorted to the Lord. Yet it must be noted that Lord Rama did not spurn him and instead showered His grace). Lord Rama in accepting the Kakasura SharaNagati addressed him "I have invoked the Brahmastra against you. You have fallen at My feet in surrender and hence I am bound to protect you. However, this BrahmAstra cannot go waste. It needs to destroy something. What do I take out with this?" Kakasura states "Lord! I have two eyes. Please take out one of them with this astram. Let me never be overcome with evil intentions like this again." Thus, Lord Rama graced Kakasura, who deserved punishment by blessing him on account of the surrender. This is seen from the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation "vadha arham api kAkutstha kR^ipyA paryapAlayaH" It is also evident from this tribute that Daya Devi alone (kR^ipayA) is responsible for transforming the Lord's seeming act of punishment into ultimate good for the jivan. This is also the import of the tribute "kR^ipe kAkasyaikaM hitamiti hinasti sma nayanam" from this Daya Satakam verse. Three instances from the Ramayanam have been highlighted in this verse, where Daya Devi transforms the Lord's nigraham into anugraham for the jivan. The scriptures are replete with numerous such instances if examined in more detail. For example, in the Trivikrama Avataram, even though Shukracharya tried to prevent Mahabali from completing his act of charity to the Lord himself, Lord Narayana did not punish him (One who comes in the way of performance of a good act accrues sin worthy of punishment

by death). Instead, He lightened the punishment by merely taking out one of Shukracharya's eyes and made it an anugraham for him. The Lord is glorified for this act by the Ahzhwar as "Chakkara kayyan". Thus, Lord's transformation from meting out punishment to eminently deserving beings to bestowing upon them His grace is brought about entirely by Daya Devi. Thus, "is it possible to capture the matchless glory of Daya Devi?" is the rhetorical question posed by Svami Desikan through this verse. An important insight to be gained from this verse is that commoners such as ourselves, who have sinned greatly and accumulated a mountainous sin-pile over aeons, incur the Lord's displeasure. As a consequence, when He decides to punish us, if we resort to SharaNagati at the Feet of Daya Devi, She is bound to transform this act of punishment into an act of protection for us. Let there be no doubt about this fact. Thus, we need to adopt the feet of Daya Devi as our only refuge to save ourselves from punishment at the hands of Lord Srinivasa. With these thoughts and extreme gratitude to Svami Desikan for blessing us with this wonderful verse, adiyen concludes the exposition of this slokam."



We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You played Your sport and influenced the Lord in three cases cited in this verse. Lord Rama became furious with the ocean-king (Varuna Deva) for not agreeing to help in laying the bridge to Lanka. He furiously aimed a never-failing arrow, when the ocean-king came and surrendered. Rama's arrow is infallible and hence cannot be withdrawn, once invoked. Therefore, at the request

of the ocean-king, Lord Rama used the arrow to destroy the ocean-king’s enemies instead.

Lord Rama seemed like a young prince, who only had a record of breaking Shiva’s bow in Mithila. Parashurama, the son of a Brahmin sage, a jealous hero of valor though, drew Lord Rama into a duel, using a superior bow (Vaishnava bow), to string which Lord Rama was challenged. Lord Rama asked “Where am I to aim this arrow?” Parashurama staked his puNya horde and was thus freed from the shackles of Dharma, as one would call it. (The rule is that one can attain moksham only when freed from the bonds of puNya and papa. If puNya alone remains, one would secure one of the pleasant heavenly worlds and enjoy material pleasure alone. Once the puNya store is exhausted, a return to the world is guaranteed. Hence, Swami Desikan emphasizes the importance of attaining Parama Padam - Sri Vaikuntam from which there is no return.) The third instance is that of Kakasura. The vile being craving for Sita’s flesh unrelentingly bit at her bosom causing it to bleed, while Lord Rama was resting on Her lap. Being awakened by the flow of blood, the infuriated Lord Rama aimed an invincible arrow. The crow went all around, chased by the Brahmastra but could not escape. Finally, the crow came to the original site, fell down tired and did not utter a word. However, Lord Rama excused the crow and only caused the arrow to take out one of the crow’s eyes-a trifle punishment for a heinous offence.

In all three cases, Oh Daya Devi, I see the influence of Your sportive impact. You made the Lord mete out punishment, though mild, that would indeed generate good for the accused and confer great coveted benefits to the offender! Who else is capable of this?”



Slokam 65

निषादानां नेता कपि कुल पतिः कापि शबरी

कुचेलः कुब्जा सा व्रज युवतयो माल्यकृदिति ।

अमीषां निम्नत्वं वृषगिरि पतेरुन्नतिमपि

प्रभूतैः स्रोतोभिः प्रसभमनुकम्पे समयसि ॥६५॥

niShAdAnAM netA kapi kula patiH kApi shabarI

kuchelaH kubjA sA vraja yuvatayo mAlyakR^id iti |

amIShAM nimnatvaM vR^iShagiri paterunnatimapi

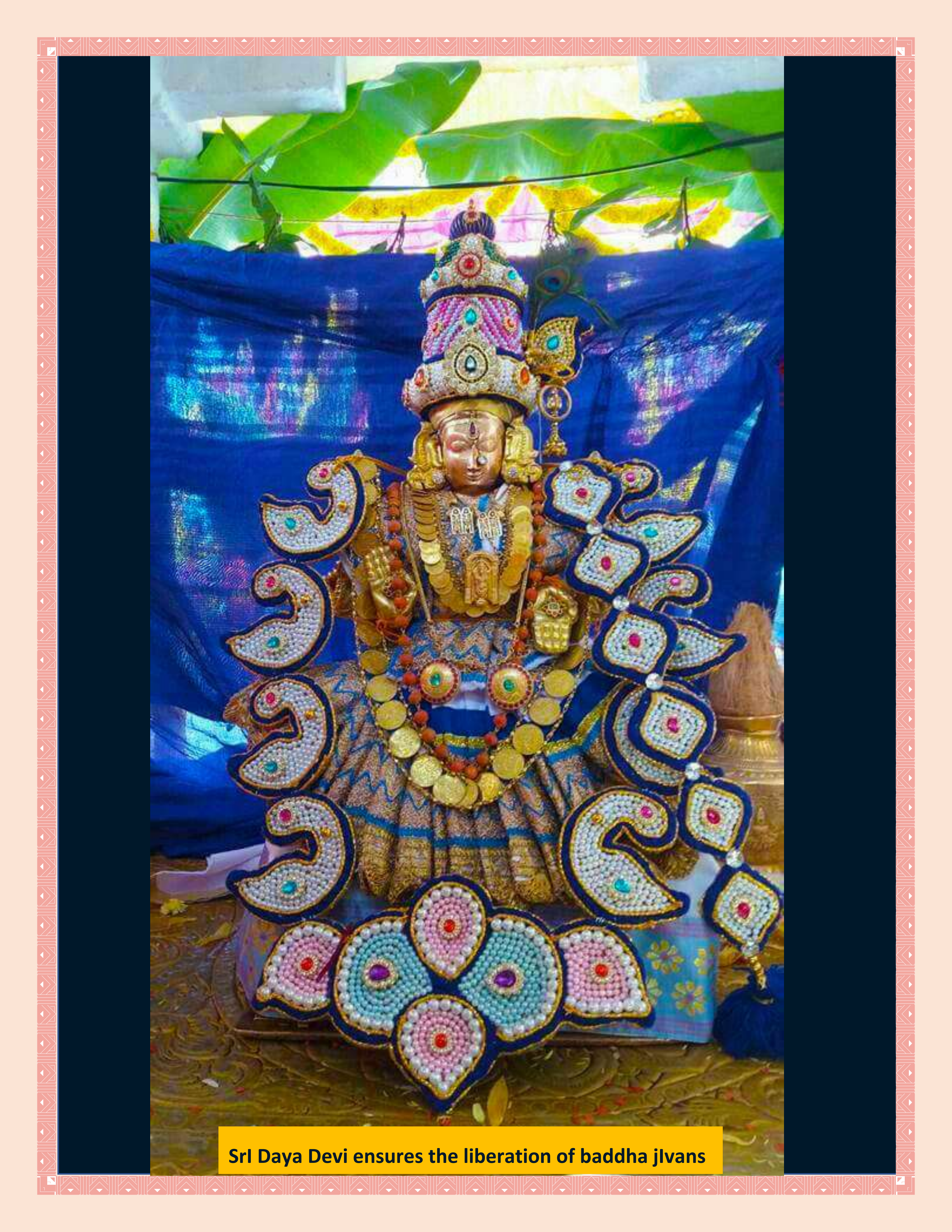
prabhUtaiH srotobhiH prasabham anukampe samayasi ||65



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The theme of this set of ten verses (61-70) extols the greatness of Daya Devi. It was established in a prior verse by Svami Desikan that Lord Narayana, who is independent and is not under the command of anyone, voluntarily adopts paratantrayam (complete subjugation) for Daya Devi. In the previous verse, it was exposited that even if the Lord had made up His mind to punish someone, due to the influence of Daya Devi, this is transformed into something good for the individual. If the Lord has made up His mind to punish someone, nobody can stop Him. This is documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "brahmA svayambhUH caturAnanovA rudrastrinetraH tripurAntakovA indro mahendra suranAyakovA trAtum na shaktA yudhi rAmavadhyam" (The four headed Brahma, the three eyed Rudra who destroyed Tripura, and Indra hailed as the Lord of the devas were powerless to stop Lord Rama's arrow). In the para devata pAramArtyadhikAram of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram Svami Desikan declares that "when one who has resorted to devatAntaras for seeking trivial benefits, turns to Lord Narayana for begetting moksham, the devatantaras who had previously graced the individual cannot do anything to harm him out of spite. This is due to Lord Narayana's constant protection." This is further evidenced in the aShTabhujAShTakam tribute "bhayaM kutasyAt tvayi sAnukampe rakShA kutasyAt tvayi jAtaroShe" (When You have decided to grace someone with the Kataksham of Daya Devi where is the need to fear? Instead of being receptacles for Your Daya, if they incur Your anger, who

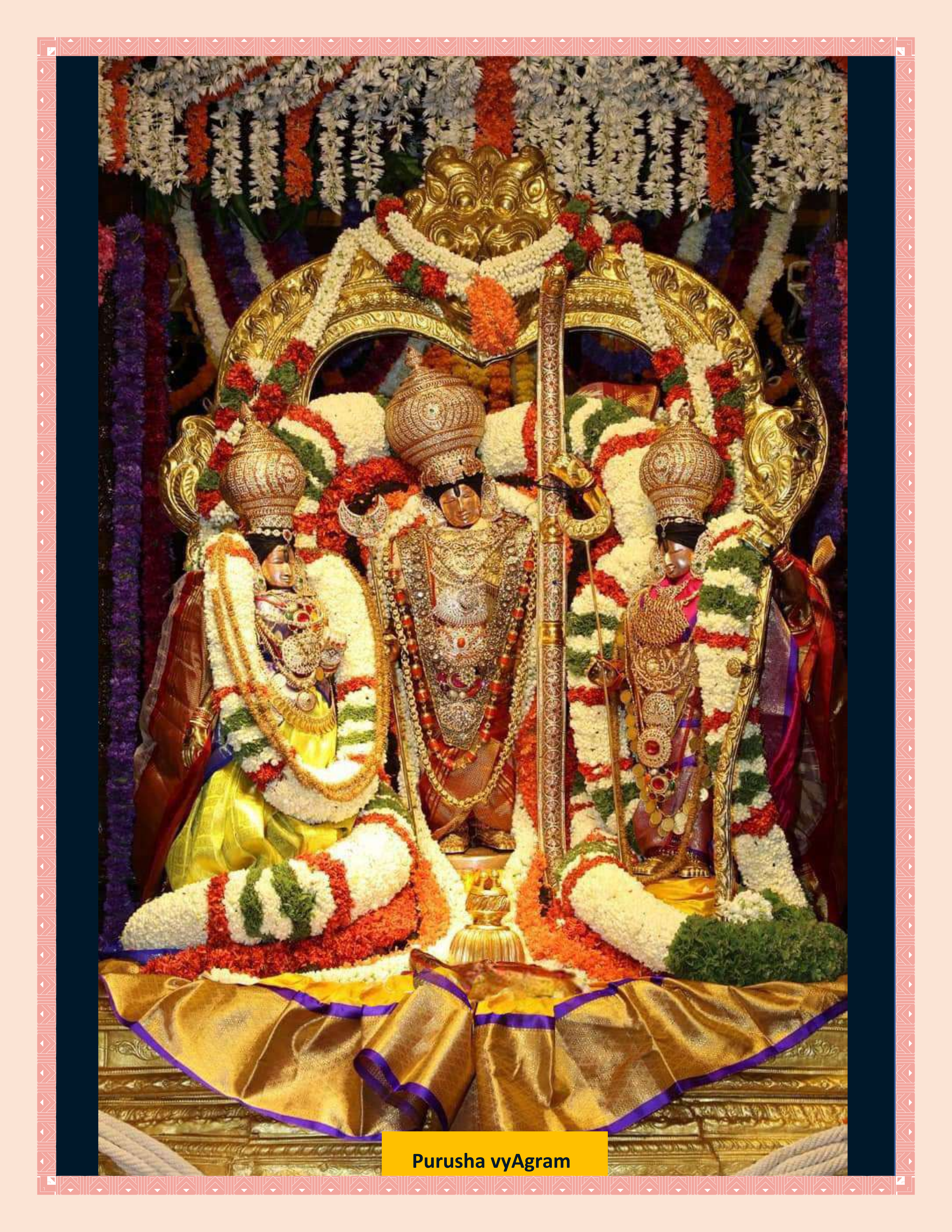
can protect them?) Even this extreme instance of one being subject to the Lord’s nigraha sankalpam (punishment) is transformed into an anugraham (blessing) by Daya Devi. The previous verse highlighted the grace of Lord Narayana to those who surrendered (fearing His punishment) due to the transformation in His disposition brought about by Daya Devi. In this verse, Svami Desikan reveals the blessings conferred by Lord Narayana on His own to commoners due to the influence of Daya Devi. This verse is “niShAdAnAM netA kapi kula patiH kApi shabarI kuchelaH kubjA sA vraja yuvatayo mAlyakR^id iti amIShAM nimnatvaM vR^iShagiri paterunnatimapi prabhUtaiH srotobhiH prasabham anukampe samayasi” The enormous ability of Daya Devi in accomplishing the impossible is documented in this verse. She ensures the union between two objects, for example a mountain and a lake, which could never come about. Svami Alavandar in the Stotraratnam declares “komajjatoraNukulAcalayorvisheShaH” (The import of this tribute is that when it comes to the Lord, who is verily an ocean, it does not matter whether the object before Him is a hill or a plateau. They are both regarded identically.) The inner meaning is that the Lord’s glory is so vast, it cannot be completely captured even by great sages like Parashara, or by the Azhvars such as Parankusha Nayaki. When this is the plight of erudite ones such as Parashara or Parankusha, commoners like us stand no chance of providing a meaningful capture of the Lord’s glory since we cannot even equate ourselves to dust in their presence. Thus, when it comes to the matter of describing the Lord’s glory there is a likeness between learned ones like sage Parashara, Svami NammAzhvar, and ourselves in that it becomes mission impossible! The import here is that even if one stays away from Lord Narayana, due to being an ArdhrAparAdhi (constantly engaged in sinful acts) and the Lord Himself is inclined to punish these beings, Daya Devi brings about a reconciliation and enables the Lord to accept such beings. The concluding part of this Daya Satakam verse “prasabham anukampe samayasi” glorifies the act of Daya Devi in rendering these seemingly opposite beings to a common state. The opposites cannot be starker in contrast! Lord Narayana shines forth resplendently due to being blemishless and due to being replete with countless auspicious qualities. Errant baddha jivans are in an extremely lowly state due to being steeped in a mountain of sins on account of their karma. However, Daya Devi brings about a union between these two extremes. This is due to Her balAskaram - that is Lord Narayana enquires “Should I accept these lowly beings?” Daya Devi compels Him to accept them with the words “Most certainly. They have no other refuge besides You!” On the otherhand errant baddha jivans due to being steeped in a mountainous sin-pile accumulated over aeons, may stay away from Lord Narayana.



SrI Daya Devi ensures the liberation of baddha jIvans

The Lord too is left wondering if He should accept these beings. However, Daya Devi influences the Lord and reminds Him "Afterall this is Your sankalpam. Why do You wish to alter this nature of Yours which affords protection to all comers? Therefore, please accept them", thereby bringing about a miracle. In the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna declares "bahUni me vyatItAni janmAni tava cArjuna" (You have taken numerous births Arjuna. I too have taken birth alongside You in each of these births.) The purpose for the Lord incarnating is to see if the jivan in one of those births resorts to Him and submits the prayer "I seek Your protection". This is the expectation of the Lord as attested to in the statement "rakShApekShAm pratIkShate". Daya Devi reminds the Lord of this Sankalpam, namely incarnating every time the jivan incarnates out of the hope that the jivan will resort to Him. Daya Devi instructs the Lord "Svami! Your very incarnations are intended solely for the purpose of redeeming these errant jivans. If it were not for them, there would be no reason for You to incarnate. Therefore, please accept these jivans and grace them, even though they are absolutely flawed. If You do not rescue them, there will be none available to rescue." Therefore, Lord Narayana gave up residence in Sri Vaikuntam to take residence in the Venkatam hill to grace all comers so much so that He does not even get a moment's respite and is on the lookout 24/7 for jivans to redeem. This is as far as the Lord is concerned. For commoners like us, there are some who offer respectful salutations to one who is erudite, and conforms to the shastras, with the view to seeking their blessings. However, there is another class that consider themselves unworthy of going in the presence of the erudite one due to being replete with faults and thus shy away from the erudite one. In the context of their disposition towards Lord Narayana, the salutation "valavEzh ulakin mudalAna vAnOr irayai" (He is the Chief of the Nithya Suris. How can we even be in His presence? Thus, beholding His supremacy, they stay away from Him.) becomes important. Svami Kidambi AppuLLar describes the state of such beings in the salutation "vAzhntu keTTavarkal" (Their life has been wasted!) This is meant to document the fact that the Lord's paratvam (supremacy) is intended to attract everyone and cause them to seek refuge. However, upon beholding the Lord's supremacy, if they elect to stay away from the Lord, they have wasted a valuable opportunity. Svami NammAzhvar declares in the TiruvAimozhi tribute "tAnOr uruvE tani vittAi tannil mUvar mutalAya vAnOr palarum munivarum maRRum maRRum muRRumAi tAnOr perunIr tannuLLE tORRi atanuL kaNvaLarum vanOr perumAn mAmAyan vaikuntan emperumAnE" (Behold the glorious Supreme Lord! He is responsible for the tasks of creation, sustenance, and destruction. All beings - sentient and insentient - form part of His body. During the time of

PraLayam, He holds all these beings in their subtle state. He is the Chief of the Nithya Suris and resides in His eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntam.) One who beholds this and yet stays away from the Lord is on the wrong path. This is documented in the Azhvar tribute "cArnta iru val vinaikaLum carittu mAya paRRaRuttu tIrntu tanpAl manam vaikka tirutti vIDu tiruttuvAn" (Both puNyam and pApam are deterrents to attaining Lord Narayana. The Lord ensures destruction of the desires that bind one to samsara. Only to reform us and lead us to Him does He incarnate as Lord Rama, Krishna, and Srinivasa. Therefore, there is no need to run away from Him in fear.) The one who causes Lord Narayana to act in the manner described by Svami NammAzhvar is none other than Daya Devi. A question that arises in this context is that "Is it possible for Daya Devi to accomplish this? Are there instances, where She has demonstrated this?" Svami Desikan illustrates this through a few episodes from the scriptures in this verse. Specifically, Svami Desikan highlights instances from the Rama avataram and Krishna avataram in this context. The enjoyment of these two Avatarams in conjunction is a unique feature of the Azhvar outpourings. Svami Desikan follows the lead of the masters in this regard. Particularly, in the TiruvAimozhi Ulagamunda Pasurams, where Svami NammAzhvar performed SaraNagati to Lord Srinivasa, he declares that Lord Srinivasa is none other than Lord Rama and Lord Krishna. The Pasuram "puNarA ninRa maramEzh anReita oruvil valavAvO puNarEi ninRa maram iraNDin naDuvE pOna mudal vAvO" reflects this fact. This Pasuram refers to the Rama Avataram instance wherein with a single arrow Lord Rama pierced seven sala trees, that were difficult to aim at. The KrishNa avataram reference comes about from the episode where Yashoda tired of His antics tied up the Lord to a mortar. Lord Krishna used the mortar to break through a tight spacing to liberate two Gandharvas, who had been cursed to take the form of two trees. The latter instance is also glorified in Svami Desikan's Gopala Vimshati salutation "yamalArjuna dR^iShTa bAla keLim". Tirumangai Azhvar too enjoys Lord Narayana in the form of Lord Rama and Krishna through the salutation "ammAn tannai". Svami Desikan follows the lead of the Azhvars in this verse of the Daya Satakam. The question that arises in the Valmiki Ramayanam is "konvasmin sAmprataM loke guNavAn kashca vIryavAn" (In this world who is it that is known for his noble qualities and for his valor?). The answer follows in Sage Narada's reply to Valmiki through his statement that Lord Rama alone is the embodiment of Kalyana guNams. Among the guNams, that which becomes prominent is the saushIlyam as described by the salutation "guNyate Apatsate AshritaiH punaH punaH anusandhIyate" (That quality, which causes the Lord to be glorified repeatedly due to offering refuge is known as saushIlyam).


Purusha vyAgram

This is defined as "sushIlam mahataH mandhaiH saha nIrandhra samslesha svabhAvaH" (Regardless of how great one is, and how low another is, the former closely embracing the latter and closely interacting with the latter is defined to be sushIlam. One possessed of this trait is called saushIlyan). This guNam comes to the fore in the Rama avataram. Svami Alavandar glorifies saushIlyam in the Stotra Ratnam tribute "vashI vadAnyo guNavAn R^ijuH shuciH mR^idurdayALur madhuraH sthiraH samaH" (One who is replete with guNams exudes saushIlyam). Thus, guNam becomes synonymous with saushIlyam. In the case of Lord Rama, if anyone in Ayodhya encountered suffering, it would greatly move Lord Rama, who would share the suffering as documented in the Ramayanam tribute "manuShyANam mR^igam bhavati dukhitaH". Likewise, if a single being in Ayodhya rejoiced due to some good fortune being visited upon them, Lord Rama would join them almost as if He Himself was the recipient of this good fortune. This is akin to someone from a small village scaling the peaks of a top University in the US and receiving the hard to obtain Ph.D. degree. When this individual is recognized during the convocation ceremony, a fellow resident from the village reasons "This is a fantastic accomplishment. Let me be there to cheer even if I have to incur huge costs to travel to this convocation." The one who would rejoice most at good fortune coming about to someone would undoubtedly be their father. In this context, Lord Rama being the father of the entire universe partook of the delight arising from the good fortune for "His children". This is documented in the tribute "utsaveShu manuShyANAm piteva". One may say, this is only an indirect testimony to the Lord's saushIlyam. Is there something more explicit? Svami Desikan answers this through the tribute "niShAdAnAM netA" (The king of the hunters). The profession of hunters is to kill. Normally one would not even seek the status of a mere hunter let alone the king among them. Even with such a person, Lord Rama had nIrandha samslesham. The reference here is to the encounter of Lord Rama with Guha, the hunter king. Lord Rama arrives at the bank of the Mandakini River. The conversation between Lord Rama and Guha in this instance is noteworthy. Rama, Lakshmana and Sita arrive at the banks of the Ganga river and upon taking leave of the charioteer Sumanthara, they are wondering what to do next. Hearing the news of their arrival, the hunter king Guha rushed to their presence as documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation "sa shrutvA purusha vyAghram rAmam viShayamAgatam vR^iddhaiH parivR^itaH AmAtyaiH j~nAtibhiH cApi upAgataH"(Beholding Lord Rama's arrival from a distance, the hunter-king, Guha, decided that it would not be appropriate for him to go alone to see Lord Rama. Therefore, he gathered all elders of the hunter clan including his own relatives and

arrived in the presence of Rama with all of them.). The next verse from the Valmiki Ramayanam "tataH niShAdAdhipatim dR^iShTvA dUrat avasthitam saha saumitriNA rAmaH samAgaccad guhena ca" describes Lord Rama's disposition upon seeing Guha setting out. Specifically, Lord Rama reasons that Guha may halt in his tracks and not come before Him. Therefore, He says to Lakshmana "Guha has set out to come to us. Let us proceed in the direction of his traverse so that we are bound to see him." The next salutation "tamArtaH sampariShvajya guho rAghavam abravIt" attests to the fact that Guha's garments were rendered blood stained and dirty due to the various animals he had killed. This Guha embraced Lord Rama and addressed the Lord through the tribute "yathAyodhyA tathA idam te rAma kim karavANi te" (Please consider this kingdom of the nishAdhas as Your own Ayodhya). "vayam preShyA bhavAn bhartA sAdhu rAjyam prashAdhi naH" is the Ramayanam tribute where Guha offers his own kingdom as a submission to Lord Rama with a request to accept and rule over the land of the nishadhas - completely subjecting himself and the residents of his kingdom to the rule of Lord Rama by way of prayerful prostration. Lord Rama raised Guha and addressed him. This is documented in the Ramayanam tribute "bhujAbhyAm sAdhuvR^ittAbhyAm pIDayan vAkyamabravIt" (Rama gently raised Guha and tenderly massaged his body while addressing him.) This is the import from the salutation "niShAdAnAM netA" of this Daya Satakam verse. It could be asked if Lord Rama, who is Chakravarthi Tirumakan (son of emperor Dasharatha), would engage in contact with one belonging to the hunter clan. The answer is a resounding yes. Most importantly, this is brought about on account of Daya Devi. Svami Desikan's poetic skills are matchless. So too is his choice of words in conveying the anubhavam of specific scriptural episodes in an unparalleled manner. Even while enjoying the Sri Suktis of Svami Desikan capturing the anubhavam is impossible for all and calls for a special sukrutham. The MahavIra Vaibhavam tribute "niShAdarAja sauhR^ida sUcita saushIlya sAgara" becomes important in this context. (This salutation documents the fact that by embracing the hunter-king, Lord Rama demonstrated that He is the ocean of the guNam saushIlyam). Lord Rama's message to Guha is captured from Sri Tirumangai Azhvar's Tiruvarangam Pasuram (Periya Tirumozhi) salutation "yEzhai yEtAlan kIzhmakan ennAtiranki maRRavaRkinnaruL curantu mAzhai mAn maDa nOkki un tOzhi umpi empi enRozhintilai" (Lord Rama is the emperor of the entire universe. However, Guha belongs to the lowly hunter clan. Furthermore, he is unskilled and is living in relative poverty. His profession is that of killing animals in the forest. Due to his clan, the inherent nature is not noble. However, completely ignoring all these facts, Lord Rama graced the hunter-king in an extraordinary

manner. Specifically, Lord Rama introduced Sita Devi to Guha with the words "Do not regard Her as a queen or princess. Instead consider Her as your friend." Similarly, He introduces Lakshmana to Guha with the words "umbi embi" to denote the fact "Please consider Lakshmana as your younger brother.") Finally, Lord Rama introduces Himself to Guha as documented in the Azhvar tribute "tOzhan nI enakkinkozhi enRa" (Consider Me as your bosom friend.) It must be noted that from the Azhvar anubhavam that the Lord did not utter these words by way of protocol reciprocity. Instead, it was a heartfelt acceptance of Guha. This is further captured through the Azhvar anubhavam "coRkaL vantaDiyEn manattiruntiDa Azhi vaNNa nin aDiyiNai aDaintEn aNi pozhil tiruvarankattammAnE". This acceptance and equalizing of the status between the lofty Lord Srinivasa (Rama) and the lowly hunter-king, Guha, is brought about entirely by Daya Devi. This is reflected in the "niShAdAnAM netA" tribute from this verse of the Daya Satakam.

Next in sequence is the salutation "kapi kula patiH" The reference here is to the monkey-king, Sugriva. In this instance, Lord Rama accepted Sugriva, who was a monkey, as his bosom friend. The nature of a monkey is the lack of firmness in anything. So much so there is the Tamil saying "kuranku buddhi" denoting the fickleness of mind. Even for such a being, Lord Rama demonstrates His compassion through His vow of friendship before the sacred fire. These days it is common to encounter divorces, which are totally in violation to the invocation uttered in front of the sacred fire during weddings. However, Lord Rama did not for once entertain the thought of revoking His friendship with Sugriva. On the otherhand Sugriva had second thoughts about Lord Rama's intentions, when he submitted his appeal upon being beaten up soundly by Vali in their fight. He in fact asked Lord Rama "Did you befriend me only to expose me to the brutal beating from Vali? If this was Your intent, You should have let me know. Being aware of Vali's prowess, I would not dare to challenge him to a fight. You swore friendship to me with the sacred fire as the witness. However, You did not remain true to Your words." In the abhayapradhAna sAram, Svami Desikan describes Rama's address to Sugriva as "Maharaja". This is significant in that the emperor for the whole universe elects to address a mere monkey as Maharaja due to the fact that Sugriva had been crowned as the king of Kishkinda, whereas Lord Rama's coronation ceremony had been stalled. Such is Lord Rama's compassion that if Sugriva was saddened on account of something it would greatly sadden Lord Rama. In a moment of anger, when Sugriva went alone to fight Ravana and then returned with great difficulty after a duel with Ravana, Lord Rama advised him with extreme concern "You should not have acted hastily and rushed to fight with Ravana. If something had happened to

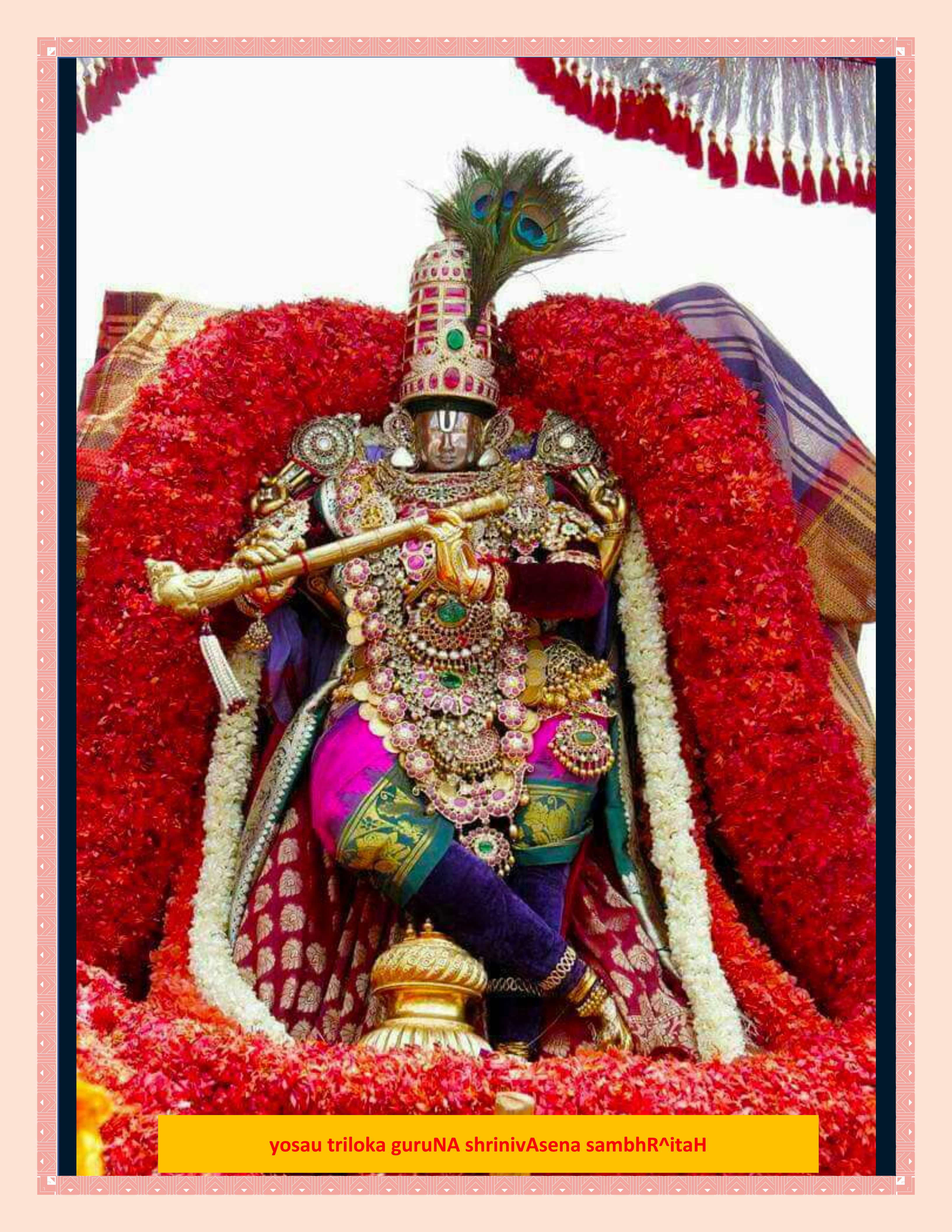

prabhanjana tanaya bhAvuka bhAShita ranjita hR^idaya

you and you did not return alive, grave conseuqences would befall us.” Thus, it is another instance of Lord Rama engaging in nIrandha samslesham with a monkey. This aspect is captured in Sri Kuresha’s SundarabAhu sthavam salutation “yajjAtIyo yadR^isho yatsvabhAvo pAdhacCAyAM samshrito yopi kopi tajjAtIyastAdR^ishAstatsvabhAvaH shliShyatyenaM sundaro vatsalatvAt” (Regardlesss of one’s caste, one’s nature or one’s looks if one surrenders to the feet of Lord Narayana, the Lord transforms Himself to adopt the same exact characteristic as the individual and engages in nIrandha samslesham with the individual.) This anubhavam is the import of the tribute “niShAdAnAM netA kapi kula patiH” from this verse of the Daya Satakam. This is brought about entirely due to the work of Daya Devi. Here again it becomes important to note Svami Desikan’s MahavIra Vaibhavam salutation “prabhanjana tanaya bhAvuka bhAShita ranjita hR^idaya” (Lord Rama derived great delight by hearing the words of the monkey, Hanuman). “bahu vyAharatA anena na kincit apa shabditam” is the Valmiki Ramayanam glorification describing the speech of Hanuman when he first approached Lord Rama as Sugriva’s messenger. It must be borne in mind that even though Lord Rama has taken up residence in the forest, He is the emperor of the entire universe. Protocol demands that conversations take place between people with similar standing. In this instance Hanuman is not a king but a minister of Sugriva. Thus, he engaged in conversation with Lakshmana, who had a similar role with respect to Lord Rama. This sambhAashaNam was enjoyed with great relish by Lord Rama. The reason for this delight is the flawless speech by Hanuman in a lengthy discussion with Lakshmana. The essence of this Valmiki Ramayanam tribute is captured in the MahavIra Vaibhavam salutation discussed herein. When it comes to Sugriva, Svami Desikan again describes the encounter with Rama in the MahavIra Vaibhavam salutation “taraNisuta sharaNAgati paratantrIkR^ita svAtantrya”(Lord Rama in accepting the SaraNagati of Sugriva, the sun of Surya, became one with him). This visesham for Bhagavan comes about entirely on account of Daya Devi. Next comes the tribute “kApi shabarI” from this Daya Satakam verse. The Lord’s acceptance of Guha and Sugriva can be viewed as a meeting of equals - Lord Rama being a king, Guha being the hunter-king, and Sugriva being a monkey-king. However, the Lord’s grace for Shabari becomes unique. Shabari was a mere commoner. Only Lord Rama can shower His grace on a commoner in the manner He did. How did this come about? Again this is the doing of Daya Devi declares Svami Desikan. “dadhyAnna pratigR^ihNIyat” is the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute that glorifies Lord Rama as a giver and one who has never sought anything. However, His acceptance of the fruits offered by Shabari reflects His unique grace

for her. Shabari was waiting for a long time for the arrival of Lord Rama. Lord Rama arrives at her hermitage. She offers Lord Rama the fruits that she has carefully gathered for Him. This is described in the Valmiki Ramayanam glorification “arcitoham tvayAbhadre gacCa kAmam yathA suhham ityevamuktA jaTilA cIra kR^iShNAjinAmbarA” (Oh Lord Rama! I have been waiting a long time for Your arrival.). Shabari continues with the salutation “tavAham cakShuShA saumya pUtA saumyena mAnada gamiShyAmi akShayAn lokAn tvat prasAdAt arindama” (Because, You have graced me with Your divine kataksham, I have become sanctified. I therefore proceed to the lokam which knows no destruction. This is entirely due to Your blessing.) Upon beholding Lord Rama, she also submitted the tribute “adyame saphalam janma guravashca supUjitAH adyame saphalam taptam svargashcaiva bhaviShyati tvayi deva vare rAma pUjite puruSharShabha” (Oh Lord Rama! I have submitted by way of worshipful offering what is possible for me. Out of Your grace You have accepted this offering and graced me. You who are known for giving has accepted my humble offering. This is a great bhagyam for me.) It must be noted that Shabara is a clan that arises on account of the union of a king with a Vaishya. Shabari belonged to this clan. Their profession is to collect items available in the forest (honey etc) and sell them in the open. Thus, as far as Shabari is concerned, her origin (parentage) is unknown. Even her name is unknown. She merely goes by Shabari - a lady belonging to the Shabara clan. Thus, even for someone of this background Lord Rama exuded compassion. This is documented in the MahavIra Vaibhavam salutation “avandhya mahima munijana bhajana muShita hR^idaya kaluSha shabarI moksha sAkShi bhUta” (Due to her tapas, Shabari had established her eligibility for moksham. The Lord’s grace came about in that He was a witness to her attaining moksham.) It must be noted here that people like Dharmavyadha, who had adopted Bhakti yogam attained moksham. Also, it is helpful to remember the fact that there is a difference between Bhakti yogam and prapatti in that the former requires a complete exhaustion of all prArabdha karma, resulting in a zero balance of Karma at which point moksham is attained. This requires an unspecified number of births for the Bhakti yogam practitioner. However, for a Prapanna, all prArabdha karma is destroyed at the time of performance of Prapatti. The only residue is the abyupagata prArabdha karma, that prevails for as long as the Prapanna lives after the performance of Prapatti. For one seeking moksham the instant Prapatti is performed (Artha prapatti) even this is destroyed and moksham is obtained duly upon completion of Prapatti. In the case of Shabari, her Bhakti yogam had fructified. The only task that remained for her as a result of Acharya anugraham due to her devoted service was to wait for the arrival

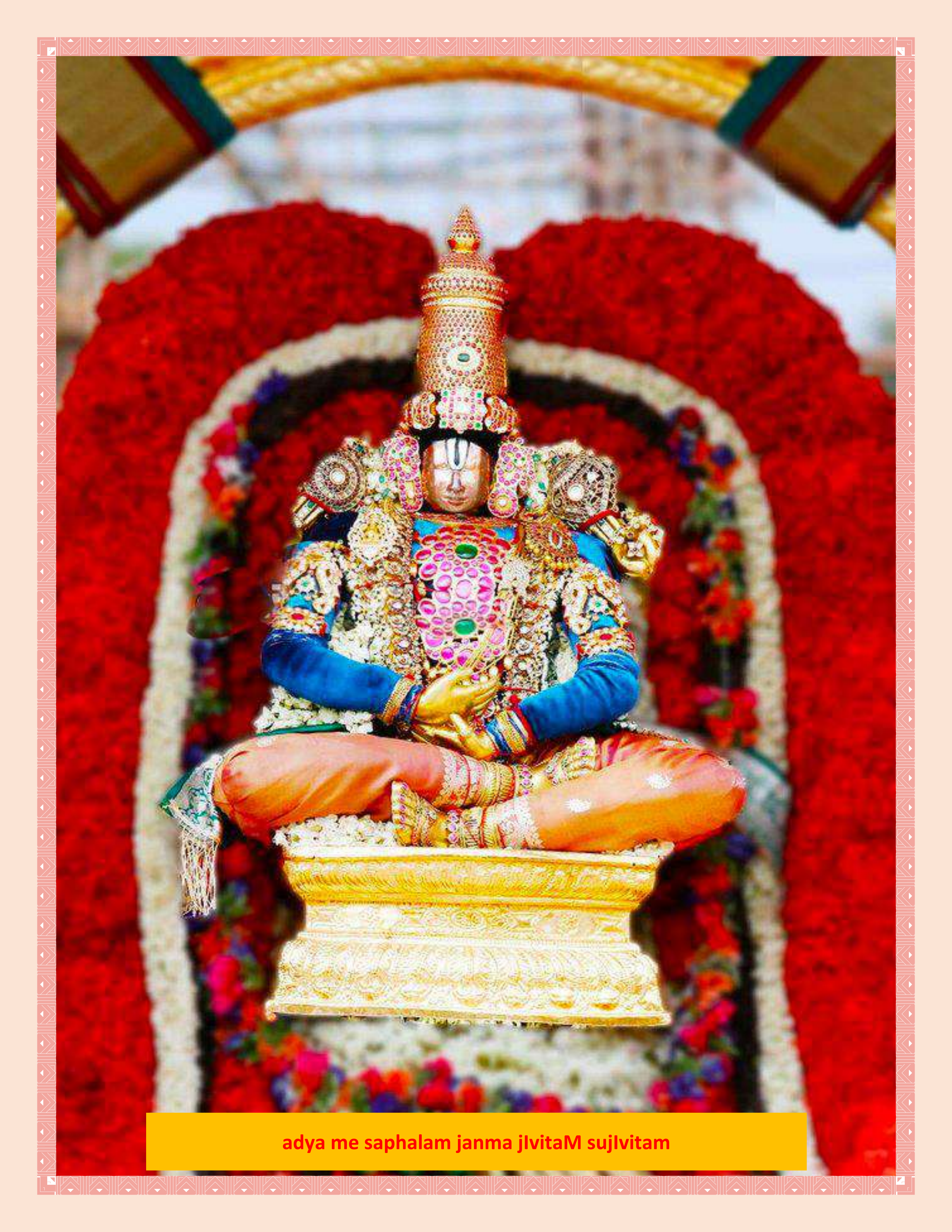
of Lord Rama and for Him to grace her with Bhagavad Sakshatkaram. "avandhya mahima" from the MahavIra Vaibhavam glorification of Shabari denotes the fact that her glory was immeasurable and her conduct was flawless. The MahavIra Vaibhavam tribute "munijana bhajana muShita hR^idaya kaluSha" describes that due to her distinguished service for Rishi Matanga, she had attained purity of heart. In a state of extreme naichyam (self deprecation), Shabari would wonder "My birth is extremely lowly. I am full of faults. Would Lord Rama arrive to grace me? Would I be fit to attain moksham?" However, on account of her flawless service to Rishi Matanga, all these doubts were banished. Instead, she was blessed with great clarity of purpose and was assured of Lord Rama's arrival on account of the grace of her Acharya, Rishi Matanga. It is helpful to recall the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute from Shabari "tvayi devavare rAma pUjite puruSharShabha gamiShyAmyakShayAn lokAn tvat praSAdAdarindama" (Oh Lord Rama! On account of Your grace, I am sure to attain the elevated lokam that knows no destruction - Sri Vaikuntam is implied here). It is also helpful to recall the Valmiki Ramayanan tributes "adya me saphalam janma" and "adya me saphalam taptam" (My penance all these years through service to my Acharya and my birth itself have been fructified due to Your grace falling upon me at this moment). The visesham for Shabari is that Lord Rama, who is known for giving, accepted her offering of fruits. This came about entirely on account of Daya Devi. Thus, equalizing the status between Shabari (as a giver) and Lord Srinivasa (who is a universal benefactor in this instance transformed into a receiver) is a unique status accorded to Shabari on account of Daya Devi. In the first line of this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan covers three instances from Srimad Ramayanam and brings out the glory of Daya Devi in the context of Lord Rama. Next, he turns his attention to the Krishna avataram through the salutation "kuchelaH kubjA sA vraja yuvatayo mAlyakR^id iti"

In the case of Lord Rama, He demonstrated his saushIlyam as a king. In the Krishna avataram, He incarnated in the cowherd clan and subjected Himself to rendering numerous menial tasks to demonstrate His saushIlyam. The first instance highlighted by Svami Desikan in this context is Lord Krishna's grace for Kuchela. The name Kuchela itself is indicative of one who adorns himself with torn garments. Although his name was Sudama, he was commonly referred to as Kuchela due to wearing torn garments. Srimad Bhagavatam describes the meeting of Kuchela with Krishna in considerable detail. Kuchela sets out on the journey to see Lord Krishna much against his own will and entirely due to the compelling request from his wife to get them out of poverty and support his large family through the words "Lord Krishna was your saha AdhyAyi at the Ashramam of sage Sandipani. He is now the


yosau triloka guruNA shrinivAsena sambhR^itaH

Lord of Dvaraka. Can you not go to see Him and find a means to feed this family that is suffering from hunger and living in abject poverty?" Kuchela responds "I cannot go to see Him empty handed! We have nothing that I can take for Him. What do I do?" Kuchela's wife packs flattened rice, which he covers with his torn garments and proceeds to Dvaraka. Upon reaching Dvaraka, he realizes that it is not easy to see Lord Krishna. There is an elaborate protocol involving several barriers. We commonly see the security detail for VIPs like when the President of the USA visits India. It becomes impossible to gain access to the VIP due to multiple layers of security that is in place. If this is the case for a mere mortal VIP, what to speak of the security detail for Paramatma, Lord Krishna? Kuchela is stupefied by the thought of the barrier that is in his way to see Lord Krishna. However, Lord Krishna sees him from a distance and immediately recognizes him. The Srimad Bhagavatam tribute "kR^iShNa sandarshanam mahyam kathamsyAt iti cintayan" reflects the thought of Kuchela (How do I get to see Lord Krishna?). The tribute "trINi gulmAnyatIyAya tisraH kakShAyashca sadvijaH viprogamyAndha vR^iShNInAm gR^iheShvacyuta dharmiNAm " (It is virtually impossible to cross this elaborate multi-layered security detail that has been put in place for Lord Krishna.) The next Srimad Bhagavatam tribute "viveshaIkatamam shrImad brahmAnandaM gato yathA tam vilokyAcyuto dUrAt priyAparya~NkamAsthitaH" documents the fact that Kuchela sees Lord Krishna from a distance lying on His bed. Immediately on beholding Kuchela, Lord Krishna gets up and rushes to welcome Kuchela as documented in the tribute "sahasoyatthAya cAbhyetya". Next, Lord Krishna respectfully welcomes Kuchela and affectionately massages him with both hands as described in the tribute "dyorbhyAM paryagrahIn mudA". Lord Krishna leads Kuchela and seats him on the same bed that the former used for resting. Furthermore, Lord Krishna turns to His consort, Rukmini, and instructs Her to offer arghyam, padhyam to Kuchela. Additionally, He asks Rukmini to apply Sandalwood paste for Kuchela. Lord Krishna and Kuchela engaged in a moving conversation fondly recounting the numerous experiences that they shared while in residence at the Ashramam of their Acharya, sage Sandipani. While this took place, Lord Krishna instructs Rukmini to render Chamara Kaimkaryam to Kuchela, which Rukmini dutifully performs. People observing this remark "kucailaM malinaM kShAmaM dvijaM dhamanisantatam devI paryacarat sAkShAccAmaravyajanena vai" The residents of the inner apartments of Lord Krishna remark "antaHpurajano dR^iShTvA kR^iShNonAmalakIrtinA vismitobhUdatiprItyA avadhutaM sabhAjitam kimanena kR^itaM puNyaM avadhUtena bhikShuNA shriyAhInena lokesmin garhitenAdhamena ca" (What puNyam has this beggar accrued? He is adorning

himself with torn garments. However, he has the great Bhagyam of occupying the seat of Rukmini Devi, who is Mahalakshmi incarnate. Not only that she is a princess by virtue of being the daughter of King Bhishmaka. She is rendering fan service to him. One who lacks wealth and wears torn garments is the object of ridicule for all and even the lowliest of people stay away from him. However, on the other hand, Lord Krishna has seated him on His own bed. What a great fortune! Indeed, this BrahmaNa has performed some great act to receive these upacharams from Lord Krishna and Rukmini.) Furthermore, the Srimad Bhagavatam continues with the tributes "yosau triloka guruNA shrinivAsena sambhR^itaH" (The Bhagavatam itself establishes in this salutation that Lord Srinivasa is none other than Lord Krishna.) "parya~NkasthAM shriyaM hitva pariShvaktograjo yathA" (Lord Krishna further warmly embraces Kuchela in the manner of a younger brother embracing his older sibling). Thus, it is clear that all this satkAram rendered by Srinivasa is entirely the doing of Daya Devi. This is captured in the tribute "kucelaH" of this Daya Satakam verse. In this regard, adiyen highlights an instance from the life of Sri Navalpakkam Svami (Sri Nrusimha Tatacharya), a great Acharya who lived in Navalpakkam. There lived a famous Bruhaspati named Bhudheri Vadyar, who took residence in Mumbai. He had performed veda adhyayanam in the traditional manner and became quite proficient. Once, during his young age, he came to Navalpakkam for a Veda Parayanam and was wearing torn garments. To save himself the embarrassment of revealing his body due to the torn garment, he was swaying from one side to another while rendering the Vedam. Sri Navalpakkam Svami observed this and at once tossed a new vastram that he had just used and instructed the boy "Please wear this". Sri Bhudheri vadyar would fondly recall "this is the vastram that came as anugraham from Navalpakkam Svami. I came to Mumbai adorning myself with this Vastram. Thanks to the blessings of this mahan, I own four houses in Mumbai today. Now I have no dearth for anything. Numerous vastrams are stocked up in my house." Thus, Sri Navalpakkam Svami's anugraham to Sri Bhudheri vadyar was very much in the spirit of Lord Krishna gracing Kuchela. Again, it must be noted that the anugraham of Lord Krishna to Kuchela came about entirely on account of Daya Devi. The next tribute from this Daya Satakam verse is "kubjA sA". Lord Krishna went to Mathura from Gokulam. It must be noted that Lord Krishna lived in the village and was coming to the city of Mathura for the first time. Naturally, He was curious to see everything that the city had to offer. While walking through the streets of Mathura, Lord Krishna and Balarama encounter a washerman, who was dutifully laundering and cleaning clothes. They asked him whose clothes are being meticulously washed and cleaned. He answered that some of them belonged to the


adya me saphalam janma jIvitaM sujIvitam

king, while a few others belonged to ministers and the like. Lord Krishna and Balarama requested the washerman to lend them a couple of clean clothes, which they wanted to use while going to the court of Kamsa, and promised to return them as soon as they were finished with the visit. However, the washerman refused on the grounds that they were lowly and unfit for wearing these clothes belonging to the king. Lord Krishna and Balarama overpowered the washerman and adorned themselves with the kingly garments. As they continued their sojourn through Mathura, they encountered a lady kubja - a hunchback lady whose body had been deformed in three places selling sandalwood balls. They enquire of her what is it that she is selling. "prasanno bhagvAn kubjAM trivakrAM rucirAnanAm R^ijvIM kartuM manashcakre darshayan darshane phalam" is the Srimad Bhagavatam tribute, which describes Lord Krishna's grace for the kubja. A mere glance of Lord Krishna transformed her from a deformed old lady to a beautiful young woman. Lord Krishna and Balarama enquired of her "Who are you selling these scented balls to?" She points to her wares and states that some of them go to the king, while others are purchased by ministers and courtiers, while still some others are purchased by common folk. Lord Krishna asks if He can get a ball of sandalwood to which the lady says "Absolutely. I shall give You the sandalwood balls reserved for the king. Not only that, You seem to be a villager unskilled in the art of applying sandalwood paste. Therefore, I shall personally apply the sandalwood paste on You." When Kubja applies the sandalwood paste, she was in a bent posture. Lord Krishna raises her with His arms, at which point the deformed lady is transformed into a beautiful young woman. This transformation from a deformed lady to a beautiful woman came about entirely on account of Daya Devi.

Next the tribute "vraja yuvatayo mAlyakR^id iti" from this Daya Satakam verse is considered. "vraja yuvatayaH" denotes the ladies of Gokulam. Sri Andal refers to them in the Tiruppavai salutation "aRivonRum illAta Aikulattu". The implication here is that Andal first refers to Lord Krishna as the Supreme Being, one without a second, one replete with auspicious qualities, one who is all pervading, one who is omniscient and the like and then enquires of the ladies of Gokulam if they are aware of any of this. To this the ladies of Gokulam answer "We do not know any of this. We only know that Krishna is the son of Yashoda and Nandagopa. He is a cowherd just like any of us." To these ladies of Gokulam, Lord Krishna confers a visesha anugraham. Sri Kuresha enjoys every limb of Lord Varadaraja in the Varadaraja Sthavam. Therein, while focusing on the cheeks of Lord Varadaraja, Sri Kuresha declares "These appear puffed up due to joy that is being currently experienced or due to recalling a delightful experience from the past." The tribute

capturing this is “parimaNDita rAsamaNDalAbhiH varadAghratam abhIShTa gopikAbhiH anuvartitadAtanapraharShAd iva pullaM hi kapolayoryugaM te”(Lord Varadaraja in His Krishna avataram engaged in rAsakrIda with the Gopikas of Gokulam described in the manner (from Krishna Karnamrutham of Svami Leela Sukar) “a~NganAM a~NganAM antare mAdhavo mAdhavaM mAdhavaM ca antareNA~NganA”. As a consequence, the Lord was filled with great joy. Recalling this experience Lord Varadaraja is exuding happiness as reflected in His puffed up cheeks.) Next comes the salutation “mAlyakR^id iti” from this verse of the Daya Satakam. This the experience of Lord Krishna with the florist, who delivered garlands for Kamsa. This is treated in great detail in the Vishnu PuraNam. In keeping with the declaration “srak chandanam”, Lord Krishna seeks out a garland to wear while going to the court of Kamsa. The florist operated in a by-lane off from the main street that Lord Krishna and Balarama were walking on. In the case of the washerman, Lord Krishna’s request for the clothes was refused and had to be gained by force. In the case of Kubja, Lord Krishna asked for the Sandalwood paste and this was duly submitted to Him. However, in the case of the florist, all Lord Krishna did was to walk down the alley to see the florist, who remarked “adya me saphalam janma jIvitaM sujIvitam” (Oh Lord Krishna! You have come to the humble dwelling of this poor florist. What a Bhagyam that You have chosen to grace this poor soul!) Without uttering another word, the florist submitted to Lord Krishna the garland meant of the king and repeatedly performed pradakshinam and prostration. The Vishnu puraNam glorifies this episode in great detail but limitations of time preclude adiyen from a more detailed discussion of the many shastrArthams embedded therein. Very briefly, certain professions are considered inappropriate and downright flawed. For example, selling food to make a living tops the list. This is in fact forbidden by the shastras. Similarly, making flower garlands from flowers meant for exclusive use for Lord Narayana and selling these garlands is not considered a good profession. However, even for one adopting this profession, Lord Krishna decided to confer His grace. Lord Krishna’s total disregard for the profession while gracing the florist was a tribute to the latter’s Bhakti. This again is entirely due to Daya Devi causing the Lord to act thus. The tribute “iti’ from this verse of the Daya Satakam is meant to illustrate the fact that the scriptures are replete with numerous such instances if one examines them carefully. Jatayu would be another case in point. In fact, Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita “ye yathA mAM prapadyante tAmstathaiva bhajAmyahaM mama vartmAnuvartante manuShyAH pArtha sarvashaH” (Oh Partha! In whatever manner My Bhaktas seek to attain Me, I grant them their wish in the same exact manner).



kaTTuNNa paNNiya perumAyan

In the Tatparya Chandrika commentary of the Bhagavadgita, Svami Desikan declares this to be a tribute to the Archa form. In this context Madhurakavi Azhvar's Kanninun Siruthambu tribute "kaTTuNNa paNNiya perumAyan" becomes relevant. This is meant to describe the fact that the Lord fulfills the wishes of His Bhaktas in the exact manner they desire. For example, if they wish to enjoy Lord Rama, who normally has two hands, as the four-handed one, He grants their wish. If they want Lord Rama as Raja Rama, who has Sita Devi on His left side, or to grant them

darsanam with Sita Devi on His right side, He grants their wish as Bhagavan Rama. Lord Krishna highlights in this slokam that as per the wishes of His Bhakta "surUpam prathimAm viShNu" (be it in stone form or image form) He fulfills their desires to enjoy Him. Thus, for this lofty Bhagavan, Lord Narayana, who has eternal residence in Srivaikuntam, to engage in samslesham with lowly beings like us, the unmistakable cause is Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that the torrential flow of Daya Devi equalizes hills and plateaus.



amIShAM nimnatvaM vR^iShagiri paterunnatimapi

First off the Venkatam hill peak can never be the same as the flat land at the foothills. However, the torrential flow of Daya Devi brings about the appearance of such an equalization. Therefore, Svami Desikan even declares in the tribute "amIShAM nimnatvaM vR^iShagiri paterunnatimapi" that Daya Devi is even superior to Lord Srinivasa, the matchless one without a second. This is due to the fact that even if someone decides to stay away from the Lord under the excuse that they are unfit for gaining His grace due to their sin-pile, Daya Devi brings about a transformation ensuring that they gain samslesham with Lord Srinivasa. Accordingly adiyen submits a prayer to Daya Devi and Svami Desikan to make us receptacles for their anugraham and concludes the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! What a forcible equalization You brought about between the Highest (Lord Srinivasa) and the lowliest, by Your floods that level down the mounds and level up the pits as in a rain or river-flow. The Lord is at the top. He is the Supreme Being. He is at the very top of Vrushadri (Venkatam Hill). When He took the avataram as Rama, He moved freely and indistinguishably with all and sundry-the lowliest too. He repeated this in the Krishna avataram. I provide a quick list: Guha, Sugriva, Shabari, Kuchela, Kubja, the unlettered Gopa women, and the garland maker, as well as many others. What is all this? Why did the Lord move freely, condescendingly, and indistinguishably with all and sundry? This is indeed the virtue, the one guNa, that is superb top quality, fittingly named as saushIlyam. It means a high personage making no fuss about mixing up with mere commoners-even the lowliest of them. This is entirely because of You - Oh Daya Devi!"



Slokam 66

त्वया दृष्टस्तुष्टिं भजति परमेष्ठी निज पदे

वहन् मूर्तीरष्टौ विहरति मृडानी परिबृढः ।

बिभर्ति स्वाराज्यं वृषशिखरि श्रृङ्गारि करुणे

शुनासीरो देवासुर समर नासीर सुभटः ॥६६ ॥

tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM bhajati parameShThI nija pade

vahan mUrtIraShTau viharati mR^iDAnI paribR^iDhaH|

bibharti svArAjyaM vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe

shunAsIro devAsura samara nAsIra subhaTaH||66



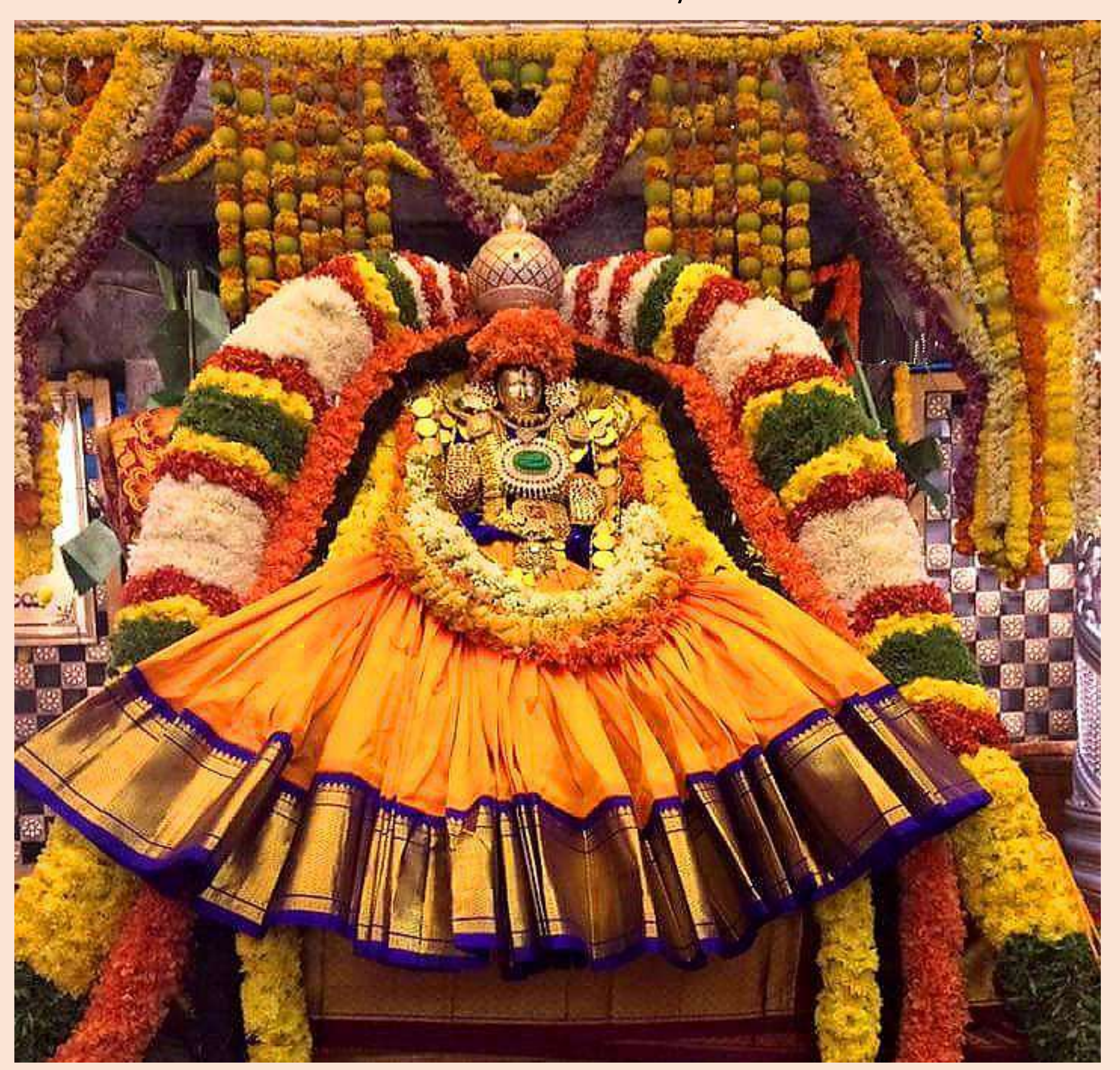
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Adiyen has the bhagyam of delivering this upanyasam on day of Makha nakshtram in Thai (Makara) mAsam, the avatara dinam of Sri Tirumazhisai Azhvar. Svami Desikan captures the Azhvar anubhvam with YathokthakAri Bhagavan in the Vega Sethu stotram tribute "bhaktAnuganturiha yasya gatAgatAni". Specifically, Bhagavan Yathokthakari implicitly heeded the Azhvar's request to fold up His serpent bed and follow the Azhvar on his way out of Kanchipuram to comply with the instruction of the king of the land. Later on, when the king apologized for his apacharam and requested the Azhvar to return to Kanchipuram, the Azhvar again submitted his appeal to Yathokthakari Bhagavan to return to Kanchipuram along with him and roll out His serpent bed to take residence at the shrine in His reclining form. The Azhvar was known for his clarity in establishing Lord Narayana as the supreme being as declared in his Pasuram "NAnmukanai NArayaNan paDaithan". In the previous verse of the Daya Satakam, Svami Desikan illustrated the saulabhya guNam of Lord Srinivasa in freely mingling with common beings through quoting from a number of episodes from the scriptures, pertaining to the avatarams of Rama and Krishna. Most importantly, the elevated role of Daya Devi in bringing out this guNam of Lord Srinivasa was highlighted. This brings up an important question. Lord Srinivasa has taken root at the Venkatam hill. He is accompanied by Daya Devi and as a result graces the lowliest of the low with nIrandha samslesham. However, is this meant exclusively for the lowly ones? Do others who are slightly elevated


tilatam ulakukkAi ninRa tiruvEnkaTatemperumAnE

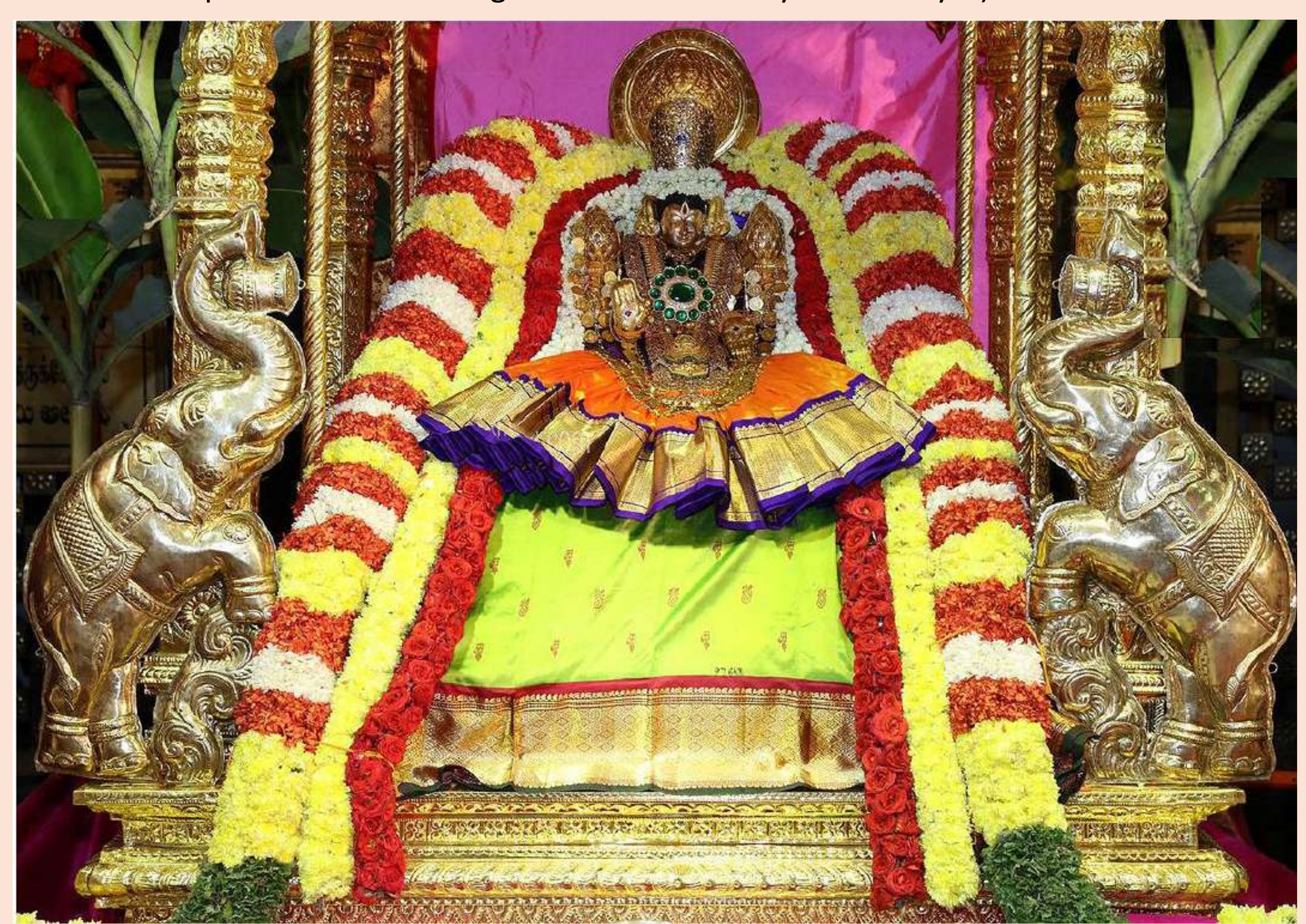
also become privy to His grace? Svami NammAzhvar declares in the Tiruvaimozhi "eNNil thol pukazh vAnavar IcanE" (Just because Lord Srinivasa has taken residence on top of the Venkatam hill, do not regard Him as a mere commoner). Instead, He is "amarkal tozhum perumAn" (The chief of Nithya Suris in Sri Vaikuntam). Svami NammAzhvar then glorifies Lord Srinivasa as "Ican vAnavarkku enpan enRAl atu tEcamO tiruvenkaTattAnukku nIcanEn niraionRumilEn en kaN pAsam vaitta parancuDar cotikkE" (The Lord of the Nithya Suris of course is a great title! However, it does not bring any credit to Lord Narayana. This is due to the fact that the Nithya Suris do not lack anything and thus, the Lord's role in rendering something for them becomes a non-issue. His true greatness comes to the fore only when He takes root at the Venkatam hill and graces the lowliest of beings like me.) Svami Desikan documents a similar sentiment in the Varadaraja Panchasat verse: "sa tvam sa eva rabhaso bhavadaupavAhyaH cakraM tadeva shitadhAramaham ca pAlyaH sAdhAraNe tvayi karIsha samastajantoH mAtangamAnuShabhidA na visheSha hetuH" (**Meaning:** Oh Lord Varadaraja! You need to grace me with Your divine weapons! Please ensure that any sins and their root cause are completely eliminated. Is Your grace meant for beings such as the elephant Gajendra and not for mortals? In response Lord Varadaraja assures him that He makes no distinction whether it be man or beast. He graces them both equally.) Therefore, Lord Narayana confers His grace equally on the highest of the high as well as the lowliest of beings. This comes about entirely due to the work of Daya Devi. His grace for the lowliest of beings is described as saulabhyam, whereas His anugraham for elevated beings is described as audhAryam. In this instance Svami Desikan states even audhAryam comes about due to the influence of Daya Devi. In Tamil, audhAryam is described as "vaLLal thanmai". atyudhAraH is a name for Lord Narayana attesting to this fact. In the Gadyatrayam commentary, Svami Desikan defines audhAryam to be "pAtralAghavam deyagauravam ca anAhR^itya dAyavibhAga nyAyena pratyupakArAdi nirapekShya vitaraNa rasikatvam"(pAtra lAghavam deyagauravam is understood from an example. If a beggar, who is normally given a small sum of money, is one day given a large sum of money, it is common to ask, whether it is appropriate to give such a large sum of money.) However, one who does not consider either the value of what is given or the suitability of the recipient of this gift, is defined to be audhAryan. Not only that. When parents apportion their assets as inheritance for their children, they are not looking for anything in return from the children. Instead, they regard it as their duty towards their children. In a like manner, Lord Narayana only gives generously to "His children"- all beings in the universe, without expecting anything in return. This

is defined to be audhAryam. Furthermore, Lord Narayana takes delight in such acts of giving. If on a given day, He gives away in this manner to several of "His children" He considers this as a cause for celebration and only craves for more such seekers.



Sri Parashara Bhattar declares in the Gunaratnakosham tribute "kasmai cidanjali bharam vahate vitIrya aishvaryaM akSharagatiM paramaM padaM vA" (While passing by one person offered salutation to Ranganayaki Thayar with folded hands. As a consequence, Thayar was greatly moved and thought to Herself "He has performed a great act of saluting Me with folded hands. What should I confer upon him? Should this be worldly riches, kaivalyam - enjoyment of the Atma or even Moksham?") Furthermore, Thayar seems to suggest "asmai na kinciducitaM

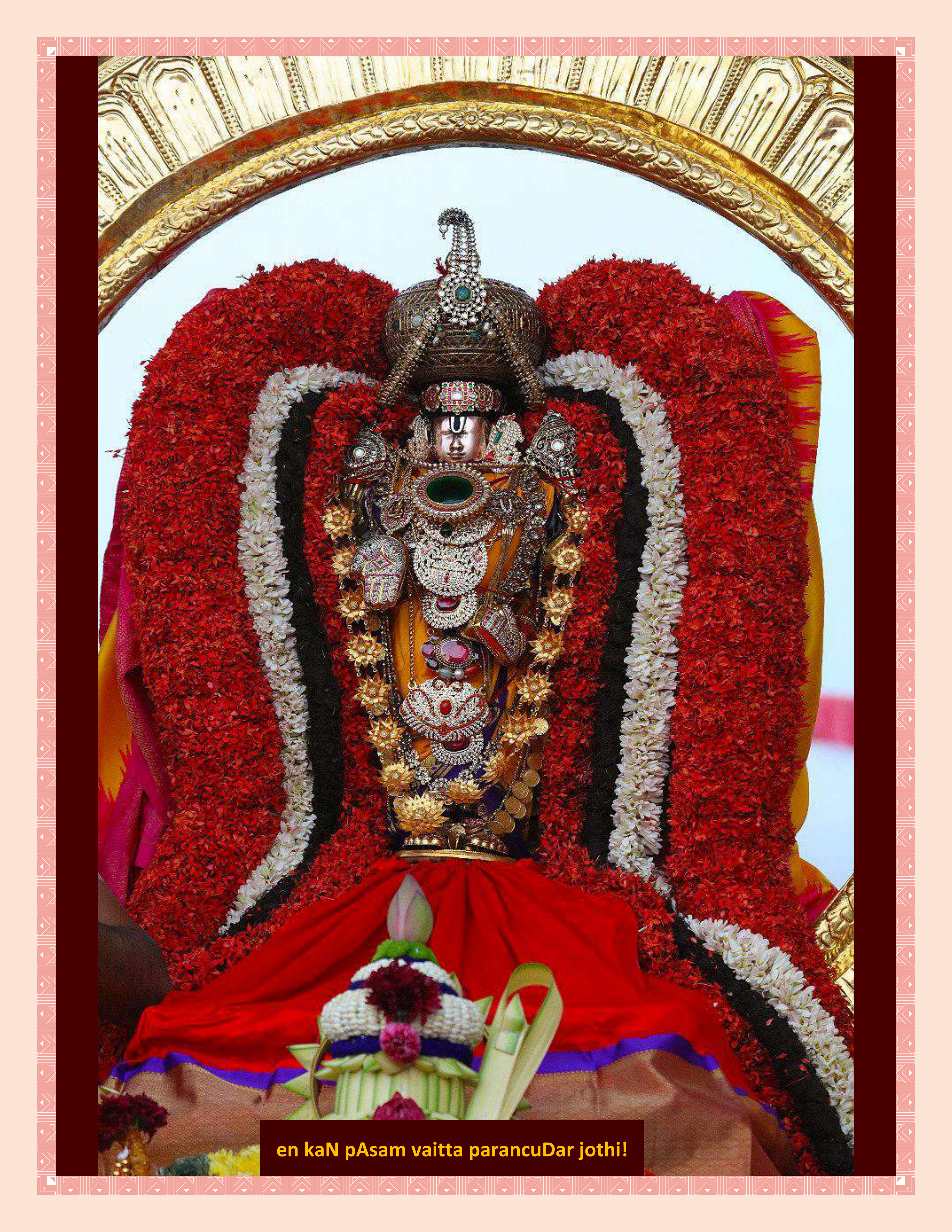
kR^itamityathAmba" (For the trouble he has taken to submit his prayer with folded hands, what I have conferred upon him is trivial). The concluding part of this tribute is "tvaM lajjase kathaya koyamudAra bhAvaH" (I am at a loss of words to describe Your compassion for this being. This is the audhAryam of Thayar).



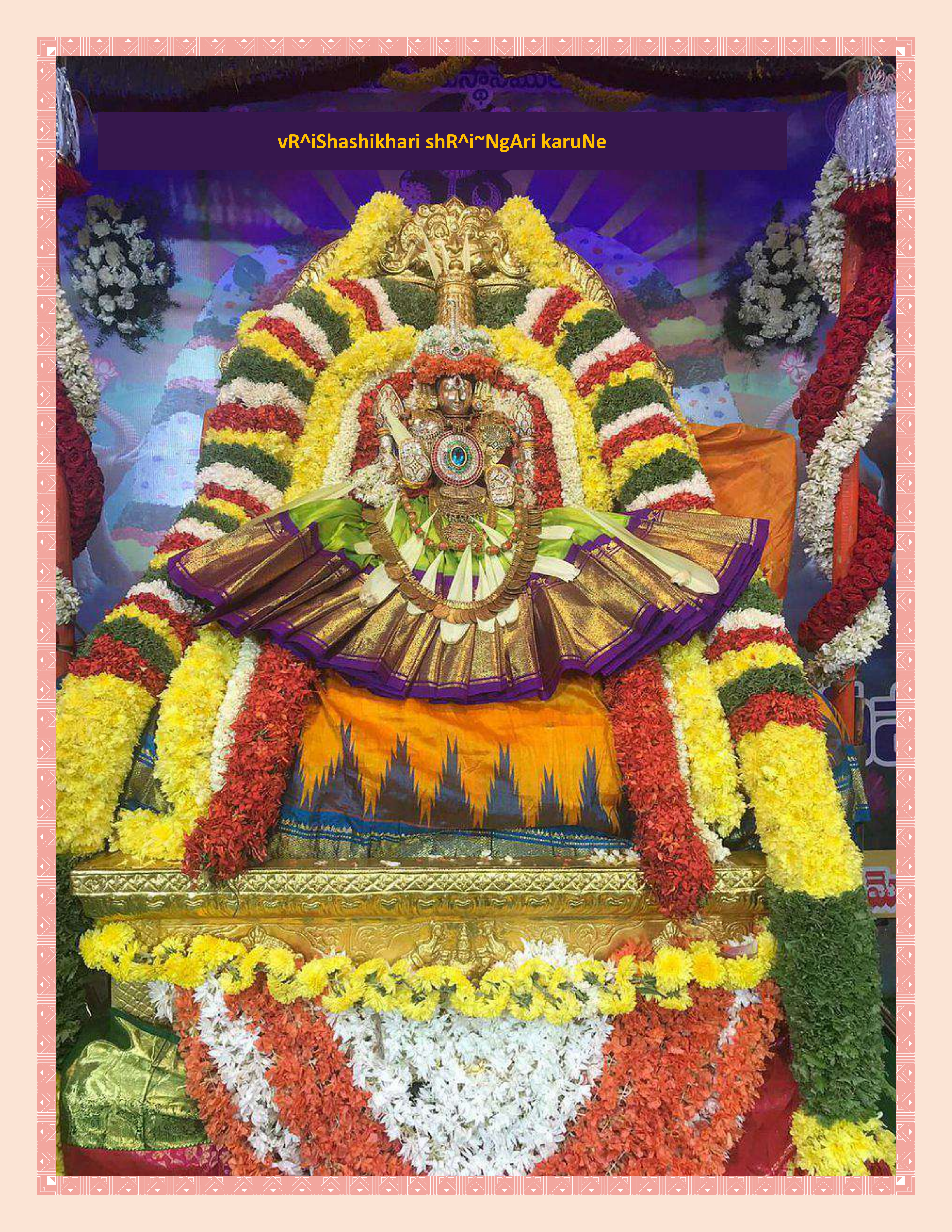
tvaM lajjase kathaya koyamudAra bhAvaH

Thus, it becomes clear that Daya Devi, who is none other than Thayar, possesses audhAryam in even greater measure than the Lord Himself! This verse of the Daya Shatakam "tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM bhajati parameShThI nija pade vahan mUrtIraShTau viharati mR^iDAnI paribR^iDhaH bibharti svArAjyaM vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe shunAsIro devAsura samara nAsIra subhaTaH" documents this fact. Here Svami Desikan employs a unique sambodhanam for Daya Devi in the form of "vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe" ("mAyAvi paramAnandham tyaktvA vaikuNThamuttamam svAmi puShakaraNitIre ramayA sahamodhate" is the tribute that Lord Narayana gave up residence in His eternal abode Sri Vaikuntam, which is replete with unmatched bliss as documented in the Upanishad statement "Anando

BrahmetivyajAnAt" and is ultimate (uttamam-superior to everything else), to take root at the Venkatam hill on the banks of Svami PushkaraNi along with His consort, RamA. This was entirely to take delight in gracing all comers to Tirumala.) It must be noted that although the pushkaraNi at Tirumala appears as a single body of water, there are two pushkaraNis there. One is Varaha PushkaraNi opposite to the Varaha Sannadhi and the other is Svami PushkaraNi. However, now there is a common entrance which has resulted in the combination of the two PushkaraNis. Only when the floodgates are opened and the water from these PushkaraNis is emptied, does the gap between them become apparent. Lord Srinivasa begets a sense of happiness, on account of taking root at the Venkatam hill, which He does not experience even in Sri Vaikuntam. This is the import of the tribute "vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri". In the Rangaraja Sthavam, Sri Parashara Bhattar refers to Lord Ranganatha as "Sriranga ShrungAri" to denote the fact that Lord Ranganatha took root in the middle of the Ubhaya Kaveri, in His reclining posture. Following Sri Parashara Bhattar's lead, Svami Desikan employs the usage "vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe" in this verse to depict the fact that Lord Srinivasa out of shrungAram for the seven hills arrived on top of the Venkatam hill. Namely Lord Srinivasa stands majestically on top of the Venkatam hill and beautifies the hill. It is worthwhile recalling Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi tribute, which captures the glory of the sacred Venkatam hill "tilatam ulakukkAi ninRa tiruvEnkaTatemperumAnE". This reflects the fact that the Venkatam hill stands like a tilakam for the entire universe. No matter how beautiful one looks, in the absence of the Tilakam, it becomes readily apparent that something is missing. However, the Tilakam fills this gap and enhances the person's beauty. In a like manner, the Venkatam hill enhances the beauty of the entire universe. Similarly, Lord Srinivasa functions as the tilakam for the Venkatam hill as described in the salutation "vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri". Thus, the sambodhanam for Daya Devi in this verse is "vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe". The work of Daya Devi is captured in the salutation "tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM bhajati parameShThI nija pade". This refers to the fact that Daya Devi is responsible for Brahma, Rudra, and Indra to gain their respective elevated positions. All occupants of elevated positions seek a continuation of the same status. It may be possible to attain the elevated status after great effort. However, retaining that status is a difficult task indeed. Sometimes the demands of these elevated positions may be so burdensome that it may cause the occupant of these positions to wonder why is it that they even attained this position. Thus, even an elevated position acquired through great effort can be quite challenging. The Prashnopanishad has an important statement


en kaN pAsam vaitta parancuDar jothi!

vR^iShashikhari shR^i~NgAri karuNe



relevant in this context in the form of a question from Satyakama, "What is the means for begetting things of material value as well as the means for attaining Sri Vaikuntam?" The answer to this comes in the form of the statement "engage in ekamAtra praNava upAsana". "shraddhayA sampanno mahimAnam bhavati" is the statement reflecting the fact that the practitioner of this upasana begets a state that is matchless in the universe. For one who engages in dvimAtra praNava upAsana, the result is declared to be "somaloke vibhUtim anubhavati" (He begets residence in the Soma Loka - Svargam and the like.) Having enjoyed the rare comforts of this lokam, when his puNyam store is exhausted he returns to the earth as documented in the Upanishad statement "punarAvartate". For one who engages in trimAtra praNava upAsana, he attains Brahma lokam (Sri Vaikuntam), enjoys unlimited bliss in the company of Lord Narayana and never returns to the earth again as documented in the salutation "na ca punarAvartate na ca punarAvartate". Here the residence in Sri Vaikuntam is glorified. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the lokam of Chaturmukha Brahma is considered. This position is acquired after a great deal of effort and upasanas undertaken by its occupant. However, even this position is for a finite amount of time although it may be a long time when viewed from a human perspective. Nevertheless, even this elevated position is not lasting for the occupant, who returns to the earth upon exhausting the puNya karma, that enabled the acquisition of this elevated position. It must be remembered that begetting this position calls for extraordinary tapas, and enormous effort to undertake numerous yagams requiring indefatigable will. Even the individual that begets this elevated position after one day at the helm is consumed with the thought that this is one day less in the seat. This is the case with people who beget the status of Prime Minister, President and the like. When one is consumed with such thoughts is it possible to remain happy in these positions? However, the occupant of the Brahma position is able to experience joy due to the grace of Daya Devi. This is referenced in the tribute "parameShThI nija pade bhajati tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM". For this Brahma to maintain his current position he needs to perform even more arduous tasks as documented in the statement "yuga koTi sahasrANi viShNuM ArAdhya padmabhuH punastrailokya dhatR^itvam praptavAn iti sushR^ima" (After worshipping Lord Vishnu for billions of chaturyugas, Brahma begets his status as the creator of the universe, which is a sought after position.). This effort is facilitated by the grace of Daya Devi. Not only that, in performing his duties as the creator rather than getting care-worn, Brahma experiences a certain delight. This comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi as evidenced by the salutation "tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM". Next, the position of Shiva


tvayA dR^iShTastuShTiM bhajati parameShThI nija pade

is described through the tribute “vahan mUrtIraShTau viharati mR^iDAnI paribR^iDhaH”. The usage “mR^iDAnI paribR^iDhaH” denotes one who is the consort of Uma (Parvati), namely Shiva. This Shiva is engaged in sport taking eight forms as per the tribute “vahan mUrtIraShTau viharati” of this verse. The reference here is to the ardhanArIshvara form of Shiva, who has transformed his body such that one half is in male form and the other is in female form depicting the fact that Shiva and Parvati exist as one in a single body. This joy of Shiva in eight forms comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi as is seen from the salutation “tvayA dR^iShTaH” of this Daya Satakam verse. How does Shiva beget this state? This is accounted for by the declaration “vishvarUpo mahAdevaH sarvamedhe mahAmakhe juhAva sarvabhUtAni tathaivAtmAnamAtmanA”. (Due to undertaking the performance of a Yagam known as Sarva Medhe, wherein he offered himself as the havis, Shiva came to be known as Mahadevan). This is documented in the declaration “mahAdevaH sarvayaj~ne mahatma hutvAatmAnaM devadevo babhUva” (Due to his act of submitting himself as the havis in the yagam for Lord Narayana, he came to be celebrated as deva deva and occupies the position of destroyer.). The salutation “vishvANllokAnvyApya viShTabhya kIrtyA virAjate dyutimAnkR^ittivAsAH” documents the fact that Shiva is celebrated in the universe as sarvaj~nyan (all knowing one), on account of his fame (as a result of the yajnam he performed) and is recognized through the adornment of the elephant skin. Shiva seeks to continue in his position as Rudra - the destroyer. This is granted on account of Daya Devi as is evident from the salutation “tvayA dR^iShTaH”. Rudra is known as ashta murthys - earth, water, tejas, thAdhrupa, sky, sun, moon, and the performer of Yagas. In kAlahasthi, Rudra manifests in the form of vAyulingam. In Chidambaram, he is celebrated as AkAsha lingam. In some other places he manifests as jyothirlingam. In Gokarna, he is worshipped as aplingam (water lingam). Thus, in these eight forms he has transformed himself into ArdhanarIshvara symbolizing his union with Uma, and is living in bliss. This comes about entirely on account of the grace of Daya Devi as documented in the tribute “tvayA dR^iShTaH”. Finally, Svami Desikan discusses the role of Indra in the salutation “shunAsIro devAsura samara nAsIra subhaTaH” The tribute “shunAsIraH” denotes Indra, who attains this position as a result of performing a hundred Ashvamedha yaj~nams. He accepts and rules over his kingdom with great joy as depicted in the eulogy “bibharti svArAjyaM”. This again comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi as outlined in the tribute “tvayA dR^iShTaH” The position of Indra too comes with its share of travails such as constantly battling the Asuras. However, on account of Daya Devi’s grace, Indra emerges victorious in his battles



The demigods beget their elevated positions on account of the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi!

with the Asuras as can be seen from the salutation "shunAsIro devAsura samara nAsIra subhaTaH" and this is the cause for him to be celebrated in the manner of "bibharti svArAjyaM". Indra is known for zealously safeguarding his position as the king of the Devas and ruthlessly eliminating all perceived threats. In days of yore, there lived a king named MAndhAtha, who was an ancestor of Lord Rama. He was known for his righteousness and thus came to occupy a status on par with that of Indra. He occupied a throne in Svarga Lokam similar to that of Indra. However, the latter was absolutely intolerant of any competition for his position. Thus, one day he posed a trick question to MAndhAtha asking, "Who was celebrated as the foremost among virtuous men on earth while you lived there?". The honest answer would be "MAndhAtha" himself. Anything else would be lying. The former would incur the exclusion from Svargam on the basis of engaging in self-praise, while the latter would result in exclusion on the basis of lying. Realizing this predicament, MAndhAtha provided the honest answer. This was sufficient for Indra to expel him from Svarga lokam. Thus, for Indra to remain secure in his position, all that is needed is the grace of Daya Devi. There are four types of people who engage in worship of Lord Narayana as documented in the Bhagavadgita salutation "chaturvida bhajantyemAm". These are Arta (one encountering suffering), arthArthi (one seeking material benefits repeatedly), jij~nAsu (one who seeks enjoyment of the Atma-Kaivalyam) and j~nAni (those that seek moksham). Lord Narayana due to His audhAryam grants them what they seek. This audhAryam comes about on account of Daya Devi. This is the import of this Daya Satakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili PatracharIar Svamin:

"Devas like Brahma, Rudra, and Indra rule over their respective domains on account of Your compassionate eye glances, oh Daya Devi!" is the crux of this verse. Other usages in this verse are due to the poetic genius of Svami Desikan.

1. Parameshti is a designation for Lord Vishnu. Hence, Svami Desikan has carefully employed the term "nijapade" to denote the position of Brahma.

2. It is more attractive to depict Lord Srinivasa as a decoration for the Hill rather than saying that He adorns the hill.

3. It must be noted that Devas like Brahma, Rudra, and Indra beget their elevated positions on account of the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi. Hence the message is offer salutations to Daya Devi. Abjure all lesser beings portrayed as Gods by laymen.

Slokam 67

दये दुग्धोदन्वद्व्यति युत सुधा सिन्धु नयतः

त्वदाश्लेषान्नित्यं जनित मृत सञ्जीवन दशाः ।

स्वदन्ते दान्तेभ्यः श्रुति वदन कर्पूर गुलिकाः

विषुण्वन्तश्चित्तं वृषशिखरि विश्वम्भर गुणाः ॥ ६७ ॥

daye dugdho danvad vyati yuta sudhA sindhu nayataH

tvad AshleShAnnityaM janita mR^ita sa~njIvana dashAH|

svadante dAntebhyaH shruti vadana karpUra guLikAH

viShuNvantashchittaM vR^iShashikhari vishvambhara guNAH||67



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "daye dugdho danvad vyati yuta sudhA sindhu nayataH tvad AshleShAnnityaM janita mR^ita sa~njIvana dashAH svadante dAntebhyaH shruti vadana karpUra guLikAH viShuNvantashchittaM vR^iShashikhari vishvambhara guNAH" The previous two verses highlighted Lord Srinivasa's saushIlyam and audhAryam. These traits acquire great fame on account of the work of Daya Devi. In this verse, Svami Desikan emphatically states that all other guNams of Lord Narayana, acquire their status as guNams only on account of association with Daya Devi. It may be recalled here that in verse 15, Svami Desikan laid out the case that the kalyANa guNams of Lord Narayana, acquire their status as guNams on account of association with Daya Devi. If not, they would verily be doshams. Here, Svami Desikan dwells on the elevated status gained by these guNams on account of association with Daya Devi. In verse 65, Svami Desikan described the grace of Daya Devi for the lowliest of beings, while in verse 66, he described Her anugraham for beings that occupy elevated positions of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra. Here Svami Desikan focuses on the grace of Daya Devi for Maharishis engaged in constant contemplation of Lord Narayana. The Sambodhanam (call out) in this verse is "daye". Lord Srinivasa is the ocean of non-countably infinite kalyANa guNams (auspicious qualities). The extent of these auspicious qualities too is immeasurable. For example, beings bound to samsaram, exhibit the guNams of satva, rajas, and tamas in direct proportion to their accumulated Karma. Those that have

accumulated puNyam exhibit a great deal of satva guNam, while ordinary beings predominantly demonstrate rajo guNam. Those who have sinned greatly, exhibit tamo guNam. However, Lord Narayana, who is replete with shuddha satvam, possesses limitless (ananta) kalyANa guNams.



The union of the kalyANa guNams of Lord Narayana with Daya Devi

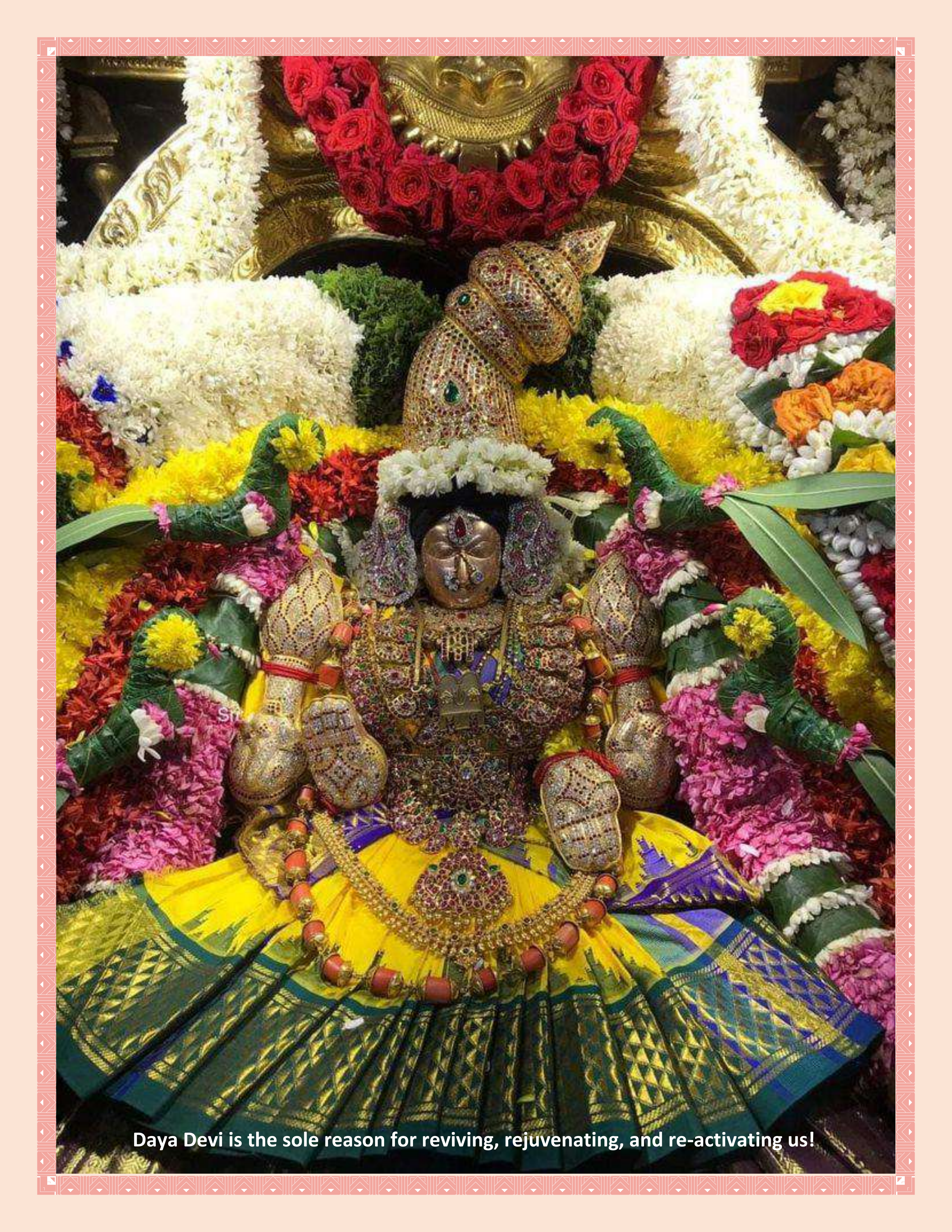
These kalyANa guNams find their abode in Lord Narayana, who is verily an ocean that is impossible to measure. In this verse, Svami Desikan visualizes this ocean as an ocean of milk. Daya Devi is described as a river/ocean of amrutam (life-giving elixir). This is described in the salutation "sindhu" of this Daya Satakam verse. Specifically, Svami Desikan captures the beauty arising from the union of this river/ocean with the ocean of milk known as Lord Srinivasa. This is the union of the kalyANa guNams of Lord Narayana with Daya Devi, which is captured in the tribute "daye dugdho danvad vyati yuta sudhA sindhu nayataH".



Milk by itself is refreshing. When mixed with sugar, it imparts a sweet taste to the milk. However, when heated and stirred into a paste and mixed with cardamom, saffron, and sugar, it acquires an even more pleasing taste, and the dish is known as "thiraTTi pAl" in Tamil. The inner meaning is that no matter what form Lord Narayana is visualized (para, vyUha, vibhava, archa, or hArdha), only when enjoyed in the context of His union with Daya Devi does the anubhavam become complete, fulfilling, and tasty. This is documented in the Azhvar anubhavam of Lord Narayana in the Pasuram "tEnum pAlum kannalum amutumaki tittippa" (Honey, milk, sugarcane juice, and amrutham when enjoyed in a mixture yields a unique flavor). In the month of MarghashIrsha (Margazhi in Tamil), during tiruvaradhanam, madhuparkam is submitted by way of naivedyam to Lord Narayana. This is usually

a mixture of milk, honey, and jaggery. The flavor for this madhuparkam is quite unique and unmatched. Likewise, if the kalyANa guNams of Lord Narayana, which exist in a manner analogous to milk, honey and the like, are mixed with the amrutam of Daya Devi it yields a matchlessly delectable flavor.

Four important benefits arising from this mixture are highlighted in this verse. First is "mR^ita sa~njIvana dashAH" namely that of reviving a dead man. Next, it causes "shruti vadana karpUra guLikAH". The head of the Vedam so to speak are the Upanishads. This causes the "karpUra guLikAH" for the Upanishads. Then follows "chittaM viShuNvantaH" that is one which greatly moves the mind and soul. Finally, "dAntebhyaH svadante" arises. Namely, it is a source of great delight for those engaged in constant contemplation of Lord Narayana. These are examined one by one. The term mR^ita sa~njIvanam has been employed by Svami Desikan in an earlier verse (Slokam 22) "kalashodadhisampado bhavatyAH" which concludes with "mR^ita sanjIvanamanjanAchalendoH" The earlier usage refers to the fact that Lord Srinivasa arose as a result of churning the ocean known as Daya Devi. This Divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa confers "mR^ita sa~njIvanam" namely, reviving the dead. The usages jIvanam, sanjIvanam, and mR^ita sanjIvanam need to be considered in this context - jIvanam denotes existence in some form, perhaps even in a comatose state but still alive, while sanjIvanam denotes a healthy person with sturdy limbs, who is engaged in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam by putting his senses to proper use, whereas mR^ita refers to one whose sense organs have failed but is clinging on to life simply on account of breath. The Divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa is capable of reviving such a dead person as denoted by the usage mR^ita sa~njIvanam. This is an act brought about by Daya Devi. It helps to examine who are the mR^itas and how they are revived by Daya Devi. In this context the mR^ita prAyas are those who are bereft of the knowledge that they are the sheShAs (eternal servants) of Lord Narayana, who is the Lord and Master of all sentient and insentient beings in the Universe. Thus, all beings in the Universe are dAsabhUtAs for Lord Narayana as described by the MantrarAjapada Stotram salutation "dAsabhUtaH svataH sarve hyAtmAnaH paramAtmanaH" Hence, those who are not endowed with the knowledge that they are inherently dAsabhUtas of Lord Srinivasa and act in a manner contrary to this fact are mR^ita prAyas. However, due to the grace of Daya Devi, they gain knowledge of their inherent nature (svarUpam) of being dAsabhUtas for Lord Srinivasa and become engaged in His Kaimkaryam. On account of contact with Daya Devi, the kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana cause these mR^ita prAyas to become mR^ita sanjIvanas. This is captured in the tribute "tvad AshleShAnnityam" (due to contact of the kalyaNa guNams with Daya Devi).



Daya Devi is the sole reason for reviving, rejuvenating, and re-activating us!

Even atheists (mR^ita prAyas), who but once come to the Venkatam hill and prostrate before Lord Srinivasa are transformed into mR^ita sanjIvanas at that very instant on account of Daya Devi's contact with the Lord's kalyaNa guNams. They then begin to yearn for repeated opportunities to offer prayers to Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. Next the tribute "shruti vadana karpUra guLikAH" is examined. The Vedas acquired a state, where people were engaged in gross misinterpretations and propagation of incorrect/flawed positions contrary to the true import of Vedic statements. This is another form of mR^ita prAyas. If one who is suffering greatly from health issues and is almost in a dead state, offering a small amount of edible camphor (pacchai karpUram in Tamil) will cause his tongue to become wet thereby resulting in a mR^ita sanjivana position. The Upanishads extol the glory of Lord Narayana and highlight the loftiness of His numerous auspicious attributes. However, if these attributes are glorified without the association of Daya Devi, they do not fit. The greatness of Lord Narayana can be understood from the Upanishads alone. That which lends loftiness to the exposition of the Upanishads in the manner of the Lord's kalyaNa guNams being associated with Daya Devi is like the offering of edible camphor, which brings moisture to the parched tongues and causes them to engage in the correct interpretation of the Upanishads. This is again due to the kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana coming in contact with Daya Devi. Sri Andal seeks to understand and appreciate every limb of Lord Narayana. She wonders how to go about this task. "matuvin tuzhAi muDi mAlE! mAyanE! enkaL amutE" is the relevant salutation for Andal seeking to appreciate the face of Lord Narayana. We know that delicacies like jilebi, and tiraTTu pAl, taste sweet. The question that Sri Andal poses is "Does Lord Narayana's face taste sweet in the manner of these delicacies?" Accordingly, She addresses the Lord's shankham, which enjoys close contact with Lord Narayana's lips and submits the salutation "karpUram nArumO kamala pU nArumO". (Does Lord Narayana's face exude the fragrance of edible camphor, lotuses, or jasmine flowers). She then enquires "tiru pavaLa chevvAi tAn titittirukkumO" (Oh Panchajanya! You enjoy close contact with the lips of Lord Narayana. Please enlighten Me on the scent exuded by these lips). In a like fashion, for the Upanishad vadanam (lips that render the Upanishad), a mere contemplation of the task should result in a sweet taste. For example, one may enjoy the teppOtsavam (Lord Narayana and Thayar in utsavam in a boat) during certain occasions. The mere thought of this utsavam causes one to salivate at the mouth at the prospect of the beauty that awaits. Just as one salivates at the mouth in anticipation of enjoying delicacies such as jilebi, jAnghri, and Mysore pAk, the very thought of rendering the tributes pertaining to



Daya Devi is the elixir praised by Vedas and Upanishads

the Lord's kalyaNa guNams must cause the Upanishads to enthusiastically look forward to the task. In this context, Daya Devi functions as the edible camphor offering for these lips causing them to become moist. Next, the tribute "chittam viShuNvantaH" is examined. This is a reference to the fact that the association of Daya Devi with the kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana, causes the mind to be greatly moved. "rUpameva setum mahimAnam vyakaste" is the vedam salutation that glorifies the anubhavam of offering prostrations to Lord Narayana. Upon saluting him in this manner, is it "satyam (truth) j~nAnam (knowledge) anantam (infiniteness) brahma" that comes to mind? No instead we are overwhelmed by the darsanam and left quite bedazzled by the experience. In the manner of the thorny exterior of a jackfruit yielding a sweet tasting kernel, there are several stages of enjoying the Upanishad glorification of Lord Narayana. One is the prima facie meaning of satyam, j~nAnam, anantam, amalatvam, and Anandam. The next stage is to appreciate these through a formal study of granthams such as Sri Bhashyam. Another manner of such enjoyment is illustrated through the analogy to a banana, which needs to be peeled in order to enjoy the sweet taste. This manner of enjoyment comes about on account of reciting Stotrams. In this context, the Sri Sooktis of Azhvars, and Acharyas such as Svami Alavandar, Svami Bhashyakarar, and Svami Desikan are inherently sweet and do not require peeling of any external layers. This provides a delectable flavor. Needless to say, this comes about due to Daya Devi. Thus, She causes the sweet taste to the tributes that glorify Lord Srinivasa and highlight His kalyaNa guNams. The tribute "dAntebhyaH svadante" refers to those, who are engaged in constant contemplation of Lord Narayana. These are the Maharishis, who are forever pursuing tapas and dhyanam of Lord Narayana. The association of Daya Devi with the kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana, results in a unique sweetness for their endeavors. The opening Pasuram of Svmi Madhurakavi Azhvar "kaNNiNun ciRutthAmpinAl kaTTuNNa paNNiya perumAyan ennappanil naNNi tenkurukUr nambi enRakkAl aNNikkum amutURum ennAvukkE" declares that merely uttering the name tenkurukUr nambi causes the Azhvar's mouth to water. This is the manner of the tribute "svadante dAntebhyaH" of this Daya Satakam verse, which captures the delectable anubhavam of the Maharishis. Thus, the association of Daya Devi with the kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana, gives rise to the four benefits that are stated in this verse and lends a sense of loftiness to the kalyaNa guNams themselves. Thus with a prayerful submission to Daya Devi for increase in our ruchi for Lord Srinivasa and Svami Desikan, adiyen concludes this upanyasam."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharíar Svamin:


chittam viShuNvantaH

“Try separating the Daya quality from all the other kalyaNa guNams of Lord Srinivasa, which are no doubt auspicious, delicious, and heartening. Yet such an exercise is interesting. It looks like the union of the vast ocean of nectar of Daya with the ocean of milk representing the numerous, countless and sweet-to-contemplate upon auspicious attributes of Lord Srinivasa is indeed an ambrosia that can revive a dead being. Hence it is denoted by amrutham.

We are indeed dead beings as long as we have not imbibed the seshatva spirit that marks our soul. Daya Devi is the sole reason for reviving, rejuvenating, and re-activating us as conscientious strivers for the Lord’s bliss. This unusual mixture is the content of all Vedas and Upanishads, especially. The Vedic damsels (personified and humanized as lovely ladies) have fragrant cool pills of karpUra; yes; the qualities are so lascivious for the tongue as well as heart-warming. They please the hearts of men. Men do not require any other vitalizing nutrient for the heart and body besides Daya and other qualities praised by the Vedas.

1. The one criterion that is also mentioned for such blissful enjoyment is that one ought to be disciplined, desireless, free from incessant lustful chasing of pleasures. As the saying goes when one withdraws tastes from un-godly objects, one becomes hinged to divine bliss.

2. The delineation of Daya as an ocean instead of as a flowing flood (sindhu) is not a serious error. Other commentaries too render the verse in this manner.”



Slokam 68

जग्ज्जन्म स्थेम प्रलय रचना केलि रसिको

विमुक्त्येक द्वारं विघटित कवाटं प्रणयिनाम्।

इति त्वय्यायत्तं द्वितयमुपधी कृत्य करुणे

विशुद्धानां वाचां वृषशिखरि नाथः स्तुति पदम्॥ ६८॥

jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasiko

vimuktyeka dvAraM vighaTita kavATaM praNayinAm|

iti tvayyAyattaM dvitayam upadhI kR^itya karuNe

vishudhdAnAM vAchAM vR^iShashikhari nAthaH stuti padam||68



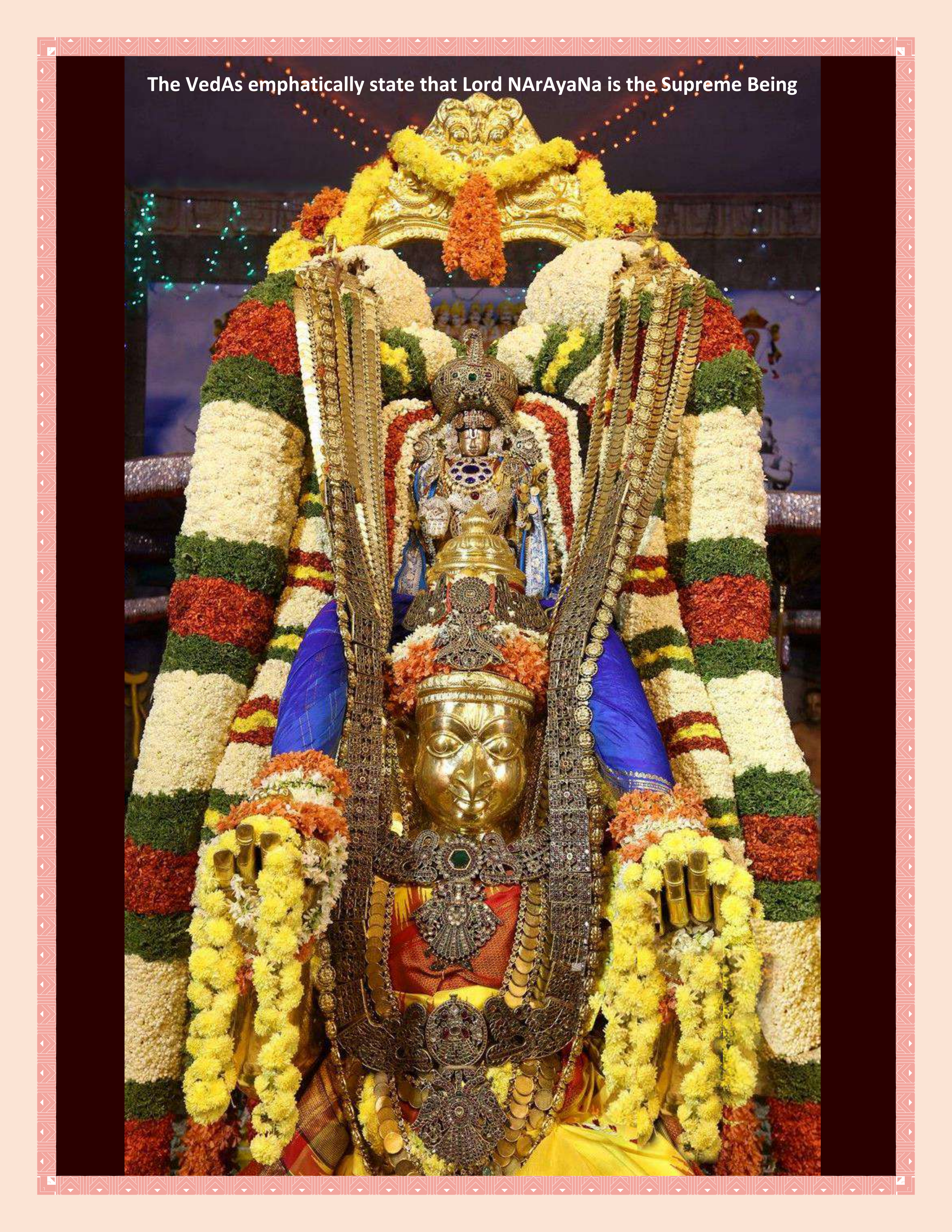
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We commence this exposition with a prayer from Svami Kumara Varadachariar's PrArthanAShTakam "shrIsaMyamIndra siddhAnta nidhirakShaikadIkShita nityaM kuru dAsaM mAM sarvatantra svatantra te". Svami Desikan has declared that it is his sacred duty to protect the Darsanam of Svami Bhashyakarar. This is evidenced by the AbhItisthavam tribute "yatipravarabhAratI rasabhareNa nItaM vayaH" (I have spent my time in the most worthwhile manner by engaging in repeated recitation and contemplation of the Sri Suktis of Svami Bhashyakarar.) Svami Kumara Varadachariar expresses his desire to be forever engaged in having as his sole objective of service Svami Desikan, whose motto was to safeguard the tradition of Svami Bhashyakarar as reflected in the salutation "nityaM kuru dAsaM mAM sarvatantra svatantra te". This verse is "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasiko vimuktyeka dvAraM vighaTita kavATaM praNayinAm iti tvayyAyattaM dvitayam upadhI kR^itya karuNe vishudhdAnAM vAchAM vR^iShashikhari nAthaH stuti padam". The previous verse was devoted to the other kalyaNa guNams of Lord Narayana being rendered complete on account of association with Daya Devi. This was illustrated through a beautiful analogy of Daya Devi being depicted as the ocean of amrutham, while the remaining kalyaNa guNams were represented in terms of the ocean of milk. The four benefits arising from this association were also highlighted therein. Daya Devi hearing Svami Desikan's tributes thus far, seems to suggest "Oh Svami! You have glorified Me beyond measure in these seven verses.

Why don't you render praise for Lord Srinivasa, in whom I have sought refuge?" Accordingly, Svami Desikan undertakes this task in this verse. Daya Devi continues "Svami! You have stated that the Vedas praise Me. However, it is only Lord Srinivasa that is glorified by them. It is also seen from the Azhvar tribute nAnmaRaikal tEDiyODum selvam. When this is the case, why are you glorifying Me?" Svami Desikan answers this as "Oh Mother Daya Devi! It is true that the Vedam pays homage to Lord Narayana. There are two reasons for this. Central to both of them is Your role." The first reason is that Lord Narayana is responsible for the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe. The second reason is that He ensures the upliftment of errant baddha jivans, who are subject to a seemingly interminable cycle of births and deaths, resulting in constant samsaric afflictions, by granting them moksham and guaranteeing that they never return to samsaram. However, these functions are carried out at Your command. Hence, You are the reason for the Vedam paying extensive tributes to Lord Narayana." This is the summary of this Daya Satakam verse. The Vedic tributes are described as "vishudhdAnAM vAchAM" in this verse. These are blemishlessly pure words. Therefore, they beget the status of "stuti padam". Due to this fact, Lord Narayana becomes the object of their tributes. In this context it becomes important to understand what is meant by stotram and how the Vedam words become "vishudhdAnAM vAchAM". Stotram is characterized through the usage of Sri Kuresa in his glorification of Thayar in the Sri Sthavam "stotraM nAma kimAmananti kavayo yadyanyadIyAn guNAn anyatra tvasato(a)dhiropya phaNitissA tarhi vandhyA tvayi" (A trait or attribute that cannot be found in a person or thing, when identified is defined to be Stotram). For example, when one is offered an edible item, even though it may border on being stale, the offeror needs to be appreciated or praised with the words "What an excellent offering!". Here something that is not good is being described as good. This constitutes Stotram. A bald man having two or three strands of hair being praised as being beautiful like Lord Krishna's flute is Stotram due to the fact that something that is non-existent is being invoked through this person. This is in the manner of "asataH" (that which does not exist being used to describe this person) is known as stotram. Note that Stotram only has a positive connotation. Any non-existent negative trait attributed to a person or thing does not constitute Stotram. Svami Desikan exposits on the tribute to the bald man in Srimad RahasyatrayasAram through an interesting anecdote. There lived a bald man, who was engaged in weighing the grains harvested from his land. A passerby observed this and rendered the tribute "Your manner of weighing the grains is itself beautiful. Your hair looks beautiful too." Upon hearing this, the former gave away a large

amount of his grain to the latter. Seeing this, a neighbor remarked to the bald man that he had been ridiculed by the passer by and not realizing this, he had gifted the passer by a large amount of grain. Furious at this, the bald man pursued the recipient and having caught up with him angrily asked “How dare you ridicule me? Do you think I am so naive that I do not realize this and can be taken for a ride?” Unfazed by this confrontation the individual calmly responded “Sir! I forgot to add that the praise I rendered for you is befitting only for Lord Varadaraja. However, even Lord Varadaraja’s beauty pales in comparison to your locks moving back and forth while you weigh your grain. It is perhaps this point that your neighbor was upset about. Hence you are angry. I apologize for not mentioning this earlier.” Extremely pleased by these words, the bald man gave him an equivalent measure of grain that he had already gifted. Thus, it is quite common for one to be pleased by words of praise in the manner of Stotram. Lord Narayana is no exception to this rule. However, when it comes to Lord Narayana, it is impossible to glorify Him with attributes that do not exist. This is due to the fact that He is the ocean or repository of innumerable auspicious qualities. So too is Mahalakshmi Thayar, who is never separated even for a moment from Lord Narayana. Thus Sri Kuresha concludes in his tribute that if stotram is defined to be a glorification of something non-existent in a person, this definition does not hold for Thayar as reflected in the salutation “tvasato(a)dhiropya phaNitiH”. This is due to the fact that any auspicious attributes that do not exist in Mahalakshmi Thayar cannot be found elsewhere. Since Thayar is the treasure-house of all auspicious attributes, this definition of Stotram does not apply in Her case. However, Sri Kuresa continues in his tribute “samyaksatya guNAbhivarNanamatho brUyuH kathaM tAdR^ishI vAgvAcaspatinApi shakyaracanA tvatsadguNANornidhau” to provide an alternate definition of Stotram. The import of this tribute is that even a heartfelt characterization and appreciation of qualities that one truly possesses qualifies as Stotram. Sri Kuresa continues “However, so numerous are the auspicious attributes of Thayar that even the four-headed Brahma, who is constantly engaged in reciting the Vedas with his four mouths cannot describe all these auspicious attributes. When this is the plight of the four-faced Brahma, is it not a case of daring born out of ignorance that causes me to glorify You? Therefore, I am unfit to render Your praise and thus cannot attempt this task.” Thus, in a wordly sense Stotram could mean citing something non-existent in a person or thing. However, when it comes to Lord Narayana, a factual rendition of praise in terms of auspicious attributes that exist in Him is a valid definition for Stotram. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, it must be noted that the praise is rendered by the salutations of the sacred Vedas in the manner of

panegyrists. In the old days it was common practice to awaken kings with a rendition of praise by his panegyrists. They glorify the heroic deeds of king as well as his noble traits to wake up the king from sleep. In this process, there may be exaggeration as well as a rendition of tributes in terms of qualities that the king may not possess (downright falsehood!). Therefore, this denotes “ashuddha vAk” (impure speech). Since praise of kings and famous personages are man-made, they are subject to flaws of exaggeration and falsehood. However, the Vedas (that have no authorship, that are eternal, and blemishless) render praise of Lord Narayana. Therefore, they are saluted as “shuddha vAk” in this verse. Specifically, the implication here is that the Vedas render their praise of Lord Narayana, who is never separated from Sri, in the manner of panegyrists. The Vedam begets the status of “vishudhdAnAM vAchAM” due to the fact that it only broadcasts the truth and does not contain even a single false statement. Svami Desikan while highlighting the glory of Svami Bhashyakarar’s Sri Bhashyam states “satyaikAlambibhAShyam yatipati kathitam” (The commentary of Svami Bhashyakarar in the Sri Bhashyam is filled with truth and nothing else.) This could have the implication that falsehood exists elsewhere. For example, some subscribe to the doctrine “brahma satyam jagan mitya” (Brahman alone is truth. The Universe is illusory.) This naturally leads to the question “We are able to behold the universe with our eyes. How then could this be false?” The school subscribing to this doctrine affirms that the existence of the universe is indeed false. However, Svami Bhashyakarar posits that everything that one sees, hears and utters is very much real and true. One may ask “Where is this documented?” Svami Bhashyakarar answers this through the statement that it is documented in the Vedam. Svami Bhashyakarar also states that even one’s dreams are also real, which invites the question “How could this be so?” Due to the fact that at the time of the dream, one’s fear or joy is real, the dream capturing these experiences is a valid reality/truth. If one has a small accumulation of puNya karma, one’s experience of the resulting joy is limited to dreams. Likewise, if one has accumulated significant puNya karma and very little pApa karma, the fears coming about as a result of the pApa karma is restricted to dreams and does not occur in practice. Hence, even dreams are real. However, other philosophies may disagree on the basis that these dreams prevail only for a short duration of time and do not translate into anything that transpires in reality. Therefore, how could dreams be true? Svami Bhashyakarar answers this through the statement that such reasoning is flawed. Every sentient being exists with a bodily form for a prescribed lifespan in accordance with their karma. Some may have longer lifespan than others, while


The VedAs emphatically state that Lord NArAyaNa is the Supreme Being

beings like insects, and animals have a shorter lifespan. However, this does not mean that the being having a certain body and living for a finite amount of time makes its existence false. In a like manner, dreams too that prevail for a short duration are true. This is the import of the tribute "satyaikAlambibhAShyam". In a like manner the Vedas utter the truth and nothing else. The Vedam glorifies Lord Narayana, who is never separated from Sri. "matApitA sahasrebhyo vatsalataram shAstram" is another important statement that documents the fact that the Vedas exude affection for all that is thousand times the love of parents for their offspring. Again Sri Veda Vyasa declares "vedAcChAstrAM paraM nAsti na daivaM keshavAt param" (There is no shastram greater than the Vedas and there is no deity greater than Keshava) in the manner of "satyaM satyaM punaH satyaM utddhR^itya bhujamucyate" (He solemnly declares with raised hands that this is the truth not once but three times). Due to this fact, Vedam becomes "vishudhdAnAM vAchAM" (extremely pure speech). This Vedam only affirms the Truth. Its instructions are exclusively for our benefit. Since the Vedam exudes affection for all that is thousand times that of the love of parents for their children it becomes "vishudhdAnAM vAchAM". When it comes to the Vedam the statement "vedAkSharANiyAvanti patitAni dvijAdhibhiH tAvanti harinAmani kIrtitAni na samshayaH" (Each alphabet of the Vedam glorifies Lord Hari. Let there be no doubt about this.) Due to this fact, the Vedam, which is blemishless and glorifies the blemishless one, Lord Narayana, with every alphabet, it acquires an extremely pure character as described by the tribute "vishudhdAnAM vAchAM". In the VaradarAja Panchashat tribute "trAt(aa)padi sthihipadaM bharaNaM prarohaH ChAyA karIsha sarasAni phalAni ca tvam shAkhAgata tridashabR^inda shakuntakAnAM kiM nAma nAsi mahatAM nigamadrumANAm" Svami Desikan describes the Vedam as a tree. Once a tree is grown, it needs to be nurtured and protected. One who performs this task for the Vedam is again Lord Narayana. He is also responsible for its propagation. One who exists as a shadow for the Vedam as well as the shelter for the Vedam is Lord Narayana. He is also the one that grants the fruits elucidated in the Vedam. Not only that the bird seated on this tree is also Lord Narayana. Are You missing from any aspect associated with this Vedam tree Oh Lord Varadaraja? This is a rhetorical question posed by Svami Desikan. The import of this verse is that Lord Narayana functions as the protector of the Vedam, as one who nurtures the Vedam tree, ensures its propagation, serves as a shadow and shelter for the Vedam, and serves as the grantor of the fruits documented in the Vedam. Thus, is there any doubt that the Vedam is extremely pure speech? Sri Kuresha describes the Vedam as "yasya nishvasitam vedaH" (The Vedam functions as the life breath of Lord Narayana). The

Vedam is "apauruSheyam" (does not have any authorship). If it is authored by a specific individual, there could be lapses on account of confusion or incorrect understanding. However, this becomes a non-issue for the Vedam due to lack of authorship. Hence it is "parishuddha vAk" (extremely pure speech). Lord Srinivasa is the object of glorification for the Vedam. The reason for Lord Srinivasa becoming the object of worship for the Vedam needs to be understood. The manner of the Vedam salutation of Lord Srinivasa is seen from the Rks "tad viprAso vipanyavo jAgR^ivAguM sassamindate", "nAnyaH panthA vidyate anAya". The reason for this manner of the Vedam tribute is documented in the salutation "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasikaH" (Lord Narayana is responsible for creation, sustenance, and destruction of the Universe). Next, He is the only one that can grant moksham. When it comes to making an important point about established truths, the Vedam always adopts the mode of description in a question and answer form through a discussion between two individuals or through the narration of an anecdote. Usually in these instances, the Vedam starts out with common usages and builds up to a significant point to establish these truths. This is illustrated through an example from Bhruguvalli of the Taittriya Upanishad. The salutation "bhrigurvai varuniH varuNam pitaramupasassAra adhi hi bhagavo brahmeti" (Bhrugu is the son of VaruNa. He approaches his father, VaruNa and requests to be instructed in the nature of the Brahman – the Supreme Being). Even though VaruNa is his father, in keeping with the Bhagavadgita instruction "tadviddhi praNipAtena pariprashnena sevayA", Bhrugu realizes the lofty nature of the Brahman, offers his respectful salutations to his father and humbly requests to be instructed in the nature of the Brahman. Specifically Bhrugu submits "annam prANam cakShuH shrotram, mano vAcAm iti ta(gum) ho vAca" (food, air, eyes, ears, mind, speech exist. Is Brahman any of these?) VaruNa replies "yatova imAni bhUtAni jAyante ena jAtAni jIvanti yat prayantyabhishamvishamtI tad vijij~nAsasva tad brahmeti" (He by whom this entire universe is created, He who sustains the universe thus created, He who engages in the task of dissolution of the universe at a prescribed time, should be recognized as Brahman - the Supreme Being.) Thus, in a very simple manner VaruNa provided an important instruction to his son Bhrugu Maharishi. Elsewhere it is stated "satapo tapyata satapastaptvA" (Lord Narayana engaged in the task of creation by undertaking penance.) The tapas in this context was required to bring about the proper order of creation in accordance with one's karma. Good accruing to those who had puNyas and punishment meted out to those that had sinned. Also, an order needed to be established to determine the sequence in which one endures the consequences of their puNyams and sins in a

specific birth. After the tapas, the task of creation comes about on account of Lord Narayana's sankalpam as documented in the tribute "ida(gum) sarvamasR^ijata" (All sentient and insentient beings are created thus.) The salutation "tadsR^iShTvA tadevAnupravishat" describes the fact that Lord Narayana completes this creation and enters these beings as their in-dweller. This is the import of the tribute "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasikaH" of this Daya Satakam verse. This is also an encapsulation of the opening verse of Svami Bhashyakarar's Sri Bhashyam "akhila bhuvanajanmasthemabha~NgAdhilIle", which documents the fact that Lord Srinivasa engages in the creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe as a sport. The opening line of this tribute is the essence of all Vedantam. This message is echoed verbatim by Svami Desikan in this tribute "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasikaH" A distinct feature of Svami Desikan's Sri Suktis is an emphasis on the fact that he is not stating anything new. Instead, he is merely reproducing the words of his pUrvacharyas. Bhagavad anubhavam too is no exception to this rule and is thus greatly enhanced as a result. Again, returning to the Vedam salutation "tad vijij~nAsasva tad brahmeti satapo tapyata satapastaptvA ida(gum) sarvamasR^ijAta", wherein it is exposited that Brahman is responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe, an important question that arises is who is this Brahman? This is answered through the statements "ekohavai nArAyaNAsIt na brahma na IshAnaH", "ne medhyAva pR^ithivI" Only one person existed as documented by the Chandogya Upanishad tribute "sadeva saumya idamagra AsIt". Therefore, on the basis of these statements, we can reasonably conclude, that Brahman alone denoted by "sat" existed prior to the creation of the universe. Furthermore, on the basis of the statement "ekohavai nArAyaNAsIt na brahma na IshAnaH", it is established that the sat alludes exclusively to Lord Narayana. This is further evidenced by the Upanishad statement "nArAyNAdbrahma jAyate nArAyaNAdrudro jAyate nArAyaNAdindro jAyate" (Brahma arose from Narayana. Rudra arose from Narayana. Indra arose from Narayana). The statements "nArAyaNAdevasamutpadyante nArAyaNe pravartante nArAyaNe praLiyante" attest to the fact that Lord Narayana is responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. Consequently, all the Vedas are devoted to the glorification of Lord Narayana. The Vedam goes to great extents to document the fact that creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe comes about on account of Brahman, and that Brahman is denoted by sat and that the sat is none other than Lord Narayana. Svami NammAzhvar echoes this sentiment in a simple manner through the Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram "onRum tEvum ulakum uyirum maRRum yAtum illA anRu nAnmukhan tannoDu tevar ulakODuyir

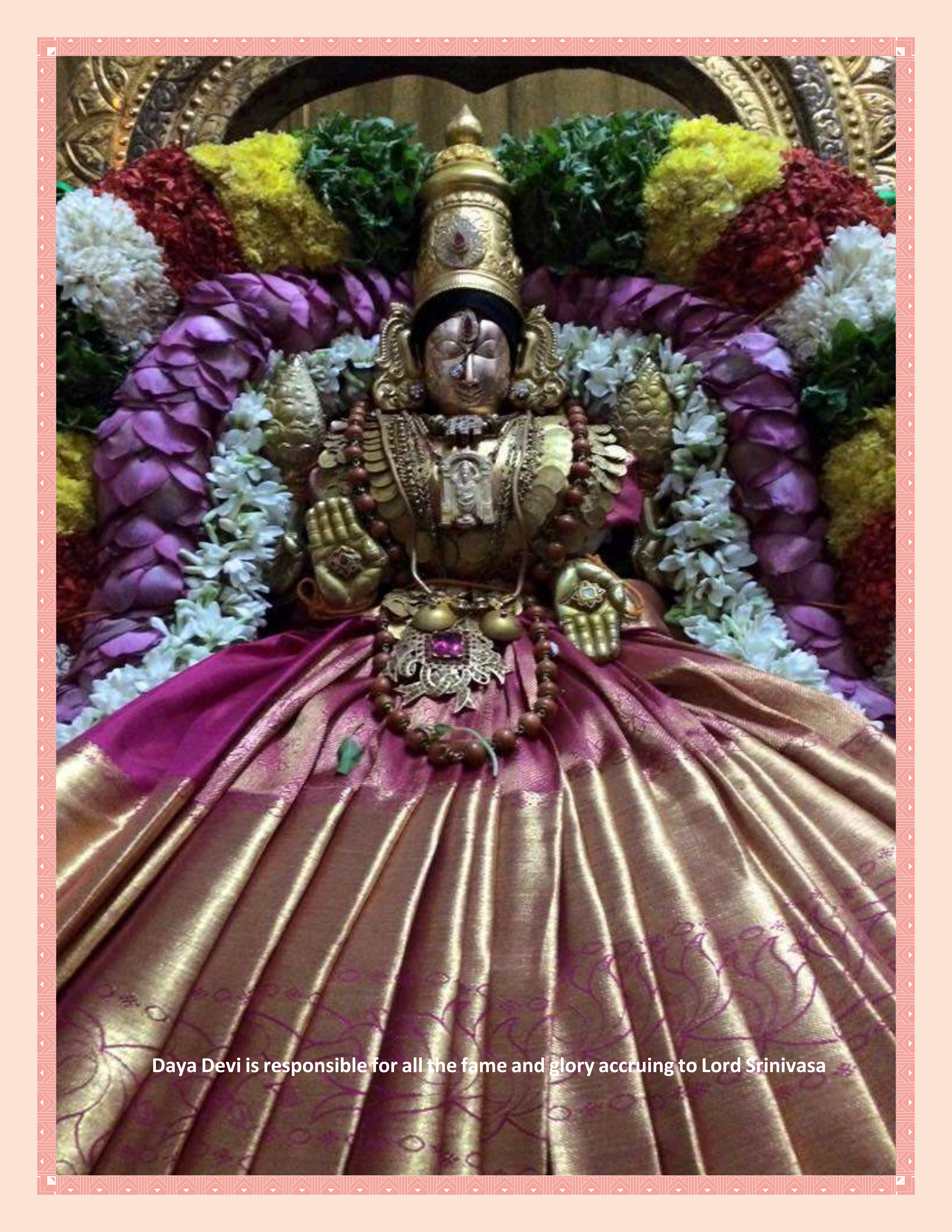

mokSham icChet janArdanAt!

paDaittAn kunRam pOl maNi mADa nIDu tirukkurukUr adanuL ninRa AtipirAn niRka maRRaittaivam nADutirE" (Lord Narayana created Brahma, and the other devas as well as the entire universe with all its beings and remains as their indweller). This is again a reflection of the Vedam tribute "tadsR^iShTvA tadevAnupravishat" Tirumazhisai Azhvar too describes the act of creation in the NAnmukhan tiruvantAti pAsuram "nAnmukhanai nArAyaNan paDaittAn nAnmukhanum tAnmukhamAi sankaranaittAn paDaittAn yAn mukhamAi antAti mEliTTu aRivittEn Azh poruLai cintAmal koNmin nIr tErntu" (Lord Narayana created Brahma. Brahma in turn created Rudra). It may be enquired on what basis is the Azhvar making this declaration. The Azhvar solemnly vows that this the truth and nothing but the truth, which cannot be altered no matter how many others may proclaim the supremacy of Brahma or Rudra. This is further evidenced by the Azhvar's tribute "ini arintEn Icarkkum nAnmukharkkum taivam ini arintEn emperumAn unnai ini arintEn kAraNan nI kaRRavai nI kaRpavai nI nar kiricai nAraNan nI nankarintEn nAn" (I have understood that the Daivam for Shiva, who is universally celebrated and Brahma, who occupies the elevated position as the creator, is Lord Narayana. This is because He is celebrated as the one who is responsible for creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the entire universe. This is my firm unshakable position.) The Mahabharata tribute "abhUta samplave prApte praLine prakR^itau mahAn ekas tishTati vishvAtma sa tu nArAyaNaH" states that the only one that exists at the time of dissolution of the entire universe is Lord Narayana, who holds all the beings of the universe in their subtle state within His body. The import of these statements is captured in the "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasikaH" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. The next question that arises is whether Lord Narayana has anything to gain on account of engaging in the activities of creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe in this manner. The answer is an unequivocal 'no'. This is captured in the salutation "keli rasikaH" of this Daya Satakam verse, which reflects the fact that Lord Narayana engages in these tasks as a mere sport. This is also evidenced in the salutation "lokavat lIla kaivalyam". He is glorified as "avApta samasta kAman". He does not need anything. All His desires are completely satisfied. All He requires for something to happen is merely His sankalpam and lo and behold the task is effected! Thus, the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe are carried out as a sport by Lord Narayana. It is important to note that clay (an insentient form) can be transformed into a pot (another insentient form) only through the act of a sentient being (a potter). Likewise, the creation of the universe can be brought about only by a sentient being - in this case Lord Narayana. This is alluded to in the "rachanA" tribute of this Daya

Satakam verse. Sri Parashara Bhattar too refers to this fact in his Gunaratnakosham tribute "shriyai samastacidacidvidhAnavyasanaM hareH a~NgIkAribhirAlokaiH sArthayantyai kR^itonjaliH" (Lord Narayana engages in the task of creation with a great deal of effort.) Srushti is carried out in accordance with one's karma. This gets complicated when it comes to even a single sentient being. What should be the ordering of the karma. How much of the effect of the puNyas and pApas does the individual have to endure? In what sequence and what time? Should the individual be afforded a chance at redemption? All of these issues pose considerable challenges when it comes to the creation of a single sentient being. What then would be the complexity that comes about in the process of creating the entire universe with millions and millions of sentient and insentient beings, their numerous pre-determined interactions on the basis of karma? This is indeed a gargantuan task carried out by Lord Narayana and hence the descriptor "with a great deal of effort". Once this is determined, He looks at Mahalakshmi Thayar for Her approval. Only upon gaining Her approval does the Lord complete His task of creation. Sri Parashara Bhattar states that only to gain the approving eye-glances of Thayar does Lord Narayana undertake the task of creation of the universe with a great deal of effort. Thus, it is established beyond reasonable doubt that the task of creation of the universe is a task jointly undertaken by Lord Narayana and Mahalakshi Thayar. This is the cornerstone of the Sri Vaishnava tradition that has been highlighted by Svami Bhashyakarar in his Sri Suktis. Furthermore, noting that Daya Devi is no different from Mahalakshmi Thayar, Svami Desikan succinctly conveys the point that the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe are jointly undertaken by Lord Narayana and Daya Devi, through the salutation "jagjjanma sthema pralaya rachanA keli rasikaH" of this Daya Satakam verse. This is the first reason for the Vedam glorifying Lord Narayana. The second reason is that Lord Narayana paves the way to attain Him (moksham resulting in eternal bliss). It must be borne in mind that attaining Moksham, which results in ceaseless unlimited bliss is the ultimate purushArtham, which is indestructible. All else is transient in nature. He who reveals the means for attaining this lasting bliss is Lord Narayana alone. This too is documented in the Vedam through the Purusha Suktam tribute "nAnyaphanta ayanAya vidyate" (There is no other path to moksham besides Lord Narayana.) "amR^itasya esha setuH"(Lord Narayana is the bridge that facilitates moksham, which is in the form of the nectar of immortality-namely moksham resulting in ceaseless kaimkaryam for the Divya Dampatis in their eternal abode Sri Vaikuntam is indestructible) is another tribute from the Vedam documenting this fact. The glorification "etam setum tiyitva andastan anando


The reason for the Vedam glorifying Lord Srinivasa is entirely due to Daya Devi

bhavati" documents the fact that by clinging onto this bridge even a blind one is transformed into one having perfect vision. This transformation is brought about by Lord Narayana alone. "yamevaiSha vR^iNute tena labhyastasyaiSha Atma vivR^iNute tanUM svAm" Only one that the Lord wills can attain moksham. The tribute "vimuktyeka dvAraM" of this Daya Satakam verse documents the fact that the Lord is the sole means for gaining moksham, eloquently reflecting the message of the Vedam tribute "nAnyaphantA ayanAya vidyate". Let's say one sets out to seek something from someone. If the door to the individual is closed then it denotes aniShTam (unfulfilled desire). On the other hand, Lord Narayana welcomes moksham seekers with an open door suggesting that "I have kept this door open only for you. Welcome aboard!" Who is this meant for? This question is answered through the salutation "praNayinAm" (one who develops love for Lord Narayana). The Purusha suktam tribute "tamevam vidvAn amR^ita iha bhavati" documents the fact that those learned ones realize Lord Narayana to be the amrutham. This refers to the state of Bhakti Yogis, who recognize that Lord Narayana alone paves the way for moksham and accordingly adopt one of the prescribed upasanas for Bhakti yogam. In the VaradarAja PanchAshat salutation "mata~Nga mAnuShabhidA na vishESha hetuH" Svami Desikan refers to the fact that Lord Varadaraja uniformly showers His grace on all those who adopt the means of Bhakti yogam without making any distinction - man or beast. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the tribute is intended to convey the fact that those who engage with singular focus in Bhakti yogam for Lord Srinivasa are unfailingly graced with moksham. This is documented in the tribute "vighaTita kavATaM praNayinAm". Thus, this exclusive route with open door to Lord Srinivasa highlighting the Vedam tribute "nAnyaphantA ayanAya vidyate" is captured in this Daya Satakam verse. The "open door" description by Svami Desikan is uniquely suited for Lord Srinivasa. How so? As far as we know, the door to the shrine of Lord Srinivasa in the Venkatam hill is never closed. In all other Divya Desams, the main door to the sanctum sanctorum is closed at a certain time. However, the door to Lord Srinivasa's shrine never closes. Only for formality, the door is closed for a few moments during rendering of suprabhAtam and immediately re-opened. That too only the inner door to the Sanctum Sanctorum but not the main door. The open door is alluded to in the salutation "vimuktyeka dvAraM". Even if the door remains open always, another question that arises is whether the path to the door is easily accessible and is not hard to traverse. This is answered by the Vedam statement "esha amR^itasya setuH" (He is the bridge, the means, the prApakam for attaining the amrutham that is represented by this open door. In other words the path is


Daya Devi is responsible for all the fame and glory accruing to Lord Srinivasa

extremely pleasant to traverse. It may be helpful to review the summary of verse 51 of the Daya Satakam, that documents this fact.) Earlier it was stated that only ones chosen by the Lord can gain moksham. Does that mean it is not possible for others to beget moksham? What about such beings? The answer to this question comes from the Vedam tribute "nAnyaphantA" (there is no other path). This is captured in the "eka dvAram" glorification of this Daya Satakam verse. The Slokam "Arogyam bhaskarAt icChet shriyam icChet hutAsanAt ishAnAt j~nAnam icChet mokSham icChet janArdanAt" attests to the fact that good health can be obtained through worship of Surya, while wealth can be gained through the worship of Agni, knowledge arising from the worship of Shiva and moksham obtained through the worship of Janardhana (Lord Narayana). This leads to the question whether Lord Narayana grants moksham only and nothing else? The import of this slokam is that the ability of deities like Surya, Agni, and Shiva is limited to grant only a specific benefit. For example, Surya grants good health alone but not wealth, or knowledge let alone the elevated benefit of Moksham. Similarly, Agni can grant wealth alone but not health or knowledge. Likewise, Shiva can grant knowledge but not health or wealth. Therefore, it must be understood that these other deities are capable of granting only specific benefits in accordance with the statement "ekaikamapi phalam" whereas Lord Narayana grants all benefits in the manner of "sarvaphala pradoyi viShNuH" Thus, there is no benefit that cannot be gained by worship of Lord ViShNu - be it good health, wealth, or knowledge and of course moksham. The "vimuktyeka dvAraM" tribute is a reflection of the statement "svarga dvAram apAvR^itam" in that for those who resort to devathantaras with the objective of begetting moksham, the door to Vaikuntam remains closed. However, for those who resort to Lord Srinivasa in order to gain moksham, the door to Sri Vaikuntam remains wide open. This is the import of this tribute from the Daya Satakam. This completes our discussion of the two reasons for the Vedam glorifying Lord Narayana and is universally agreed upon. As a consequence, Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan "Due to the reasons outlined herein, the Vedam glorifies Lord Srinivasa. Why then are you paying homage to Me?" The answer is provided by Svami Desikan through the tribute "iti tvayyAyattaM dvitayam upadhI kR^itya karuNe" of this verse. The import of this salutation is that both reasons for the Vedam glorifying Lord Naryana is verily due to their being subservient to You. That is, the Lord engaging in the tasks of creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe as well as being the sole mechanism for granting moksham come about due to His subservience to Daya Devi. Thus, the two reasons for the "vishuddhAnam vAcam" (Veda Vak) glorifying Lord Srinivasa come about entirely on account of the

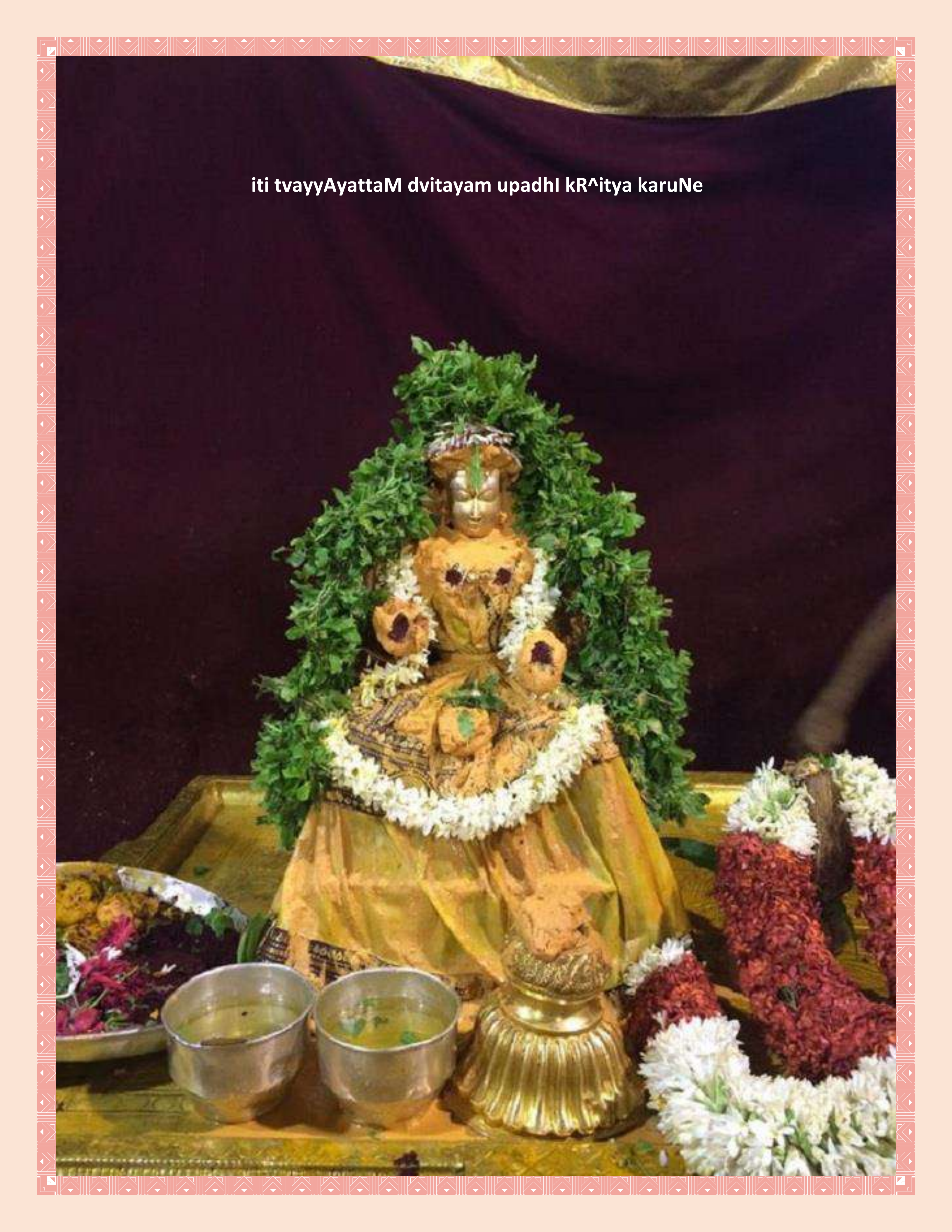
Lord's Paratantryam to Daya Devi. Therefore, even though the Vedam may offer homage to Lord Srinivasa, in reality it is a tribute to Daya Devi alone!



shraddhayA devo devatvam ashnute

Hence, Svami Desikan tosses the ball back in Daya Devi's court to make a determination for Herself as to who the Vedam is truly paying its tributes. One may ask where is this stated? Svami Desikan underscores his point by noting that the verse 17 salutation "achida vishiShTAn praLaye jantUn avalokya jAta nirvedA karaNaKaLebarayogaM vitarasi vR^iShashailanAtha karuNe tvam" eloquently documents this fact. A quick recap of verse 17 is in order. Due to the insistence of Daya Devi that these beings of the universe deserve an opportunity to redeem themselves rather than being left in their inert state during praLayam, Lord

Narayana undertakes the task of creation and endows these beings with sense organs with the intention that they be put to proper use in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Of course, this task is carried out in accordance with the Sastras in that each being begets a form in accordance with their karma. This documents the fact that Lord Srinivasa engages in the task of creation at the behest of Daya Devi. When it comes to sthiti (sustenance), one can recall a prior verse from the Daya Satakam "shamayasi tamaH prajAnAM shAstramayena sthira pradIpena rUDhA vR^iShAcalapateH pAde mukhakAnti patraLacChAya" (Daya Devi bestows the undying lamp of the Sastrams in order to lead our lives in the proper manner and thereby ensure that we are protected by Lord Srinivasa). Again, a prior verse (Verse 16) documents the role of Daya Devi in causing praLaya. The relevant tribute is "pratisancarakeLimAcarasi". In this verse Svami Desikan therefore concludes that since the two reasons for the Vedam glorifying Lord Srinivasa are entirely dependent on Daya Devi, She is truly the object of reverence for the Vedam. Thus, it is established that Lord Srinivasa acquires His loftiness, and glory only on account of Daya Devi's doing. The Vedam offers a further glorification in the statement "shraddhayA devo devatvam ashnute" (Shraddha is the name for Mahalakshmi Thayar, who is none other than Daya Devi. Due to eternal association with Her, Lord Narayana acquires His status as a deva). This tribute is most appropriate for Lord Srinivasa. His name itself is inseparably associated with Sri. The term nivAsan would otherwise make no sense. Svami NammAzhvar in the pasuram "akala illEn iRayum enRu alarmElmankai uRai mArbA" refers to the fact that Lord Srinivasa is not for a moment separated from Thayar, who always resides in His Vakshasthalam. Svami Desikan follows the lead of the master, Svami NammAzhvar, by stating that Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Thayar in the verse "samastajananIM vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm". Herein, he also establishes that Daya Devi is none other than Sri. Namely, if a suitable form is assigned to the Daya Gunam it would be none other than Mahalakshmi Thayar. In conclusion, this Daya Satakam verse unambiguously brings out the fact that Daya Devi is responsible for all the fame and glory accruing to Lord Srinivasa. She is instrumental for Lord Srinivasa to undertake the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. She is also responsible for Lord Srinivasa to be the singular path (vimuktyeka dvAram) for moksham for those who seek this benefit from him. This is the reason for the Azhvar tribute "nAnmaRaikal tEDi ODum celvam" (The reason for the Vedam glorifying Lord Srinivasa is entirely due to Daya Devi). Thus the satya vAk (true speech) of the Vedam coming about on account of the glorification of Lord Srinivasa, as documented by the truth-speaking (recall the


iti tvayyAyattaM dvitayam upadhI kR^itya karuNe

shobate satya vAdi tribute from the Devanayaka Panchasat) Svami Desikan is entirely due to the grace of Daya Devi is the import of this Daya Satakam verse. We complete the exposition of this verse seeking the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi and Swami Desikan for all."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

" Oh Daya Devi! The Lord himself takes on the the following tasks:

(i) The three-fold duty of creation, maintenance, and termination of the universe and discharges it as if it were a mere child's play with great relish

(ii) The duty of functioning as the ONLY transporter of His dear ones - those who have obtained this preferential status on account of performing Prapatti - to deliverance-world for which He is the ONLY path, the ONLY doorway so to say. He keeps the doors of His eternal abode-the moksha-domain, Sri Vaikunta, wide open for His dear Prapanna to enter freely.

That these two favors He renders are but due to Your motivating Him. Shall I then say that if the flawless Vedas concede to Your Lord, Srinivasa, the Head of Vrushadri, a worth to be praised by them, they being the embodiments of Truth and Eternity, just like the Lord, it is because You encourage Him in these directions. Therefore, the Vedic tributes to the Lord, are in fact tributes to You, Oh Daya Devi! You provide a pretext for Him to be praised for what You have accomplished through Him."



Slokam 69

कलि क्षोभोन्मिलत्क्षिति कलुष कूलङ्कष जवैः

अनुच्छेदैरेतैरवट तट वैषम्य रहितैः ।

प्रवाहैस्ते पद्मा सहचरपरिष्कारिणि कृपे

विकल्पन्तेऽनल्पा वृष शिखरिणो निर्झर गणाः ॥ ६९ ॥

kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH

anuchcChedairetaiH avaTa taTa vaiShamya rahitaiH|

pravAhaiste padmA sahachara pariShkAriNi kR^ipe

vikalpante(a)nalpA vR^iSha shikhariNo nirjhara guNAH||69



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The previous verse highlighted the two prinicipal characteristics (undertaking the tasks of creation, preservation, and destruction of the universe as an act of sport, and being the sole grantor of moksham to His seekers so to speak by means of a single doorway "vimuktyeka dvAram") of Lord Srinivasa, as a result of which He is glorified by the Vedam. Furthermore, it was established that the reason for the Vedam tribute is solely on account of Daya Devi, who causes the Lord to act in this manner befitting glorification by the Vedam. It is impossible to directly behold the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. It can only be experienced at appropriate times. This verse is meant to illustrate a direct view of Daya Devi. It is also meant to illustrate the fact that Daya Devi's grace is not restricted to those who were fortunate to be born in the Krita yugam, Treta yugam, and DvApara yugam. It is very much present even for common people like us in the present Kali yugam. This verse is "kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH anuchcChedairetaiH avaTa taTa vaiShamya rahitaiH pravAhaiste padmA sahachara pariShkAriNi kR^ipe vikalpante(a)nalpA vR^iSha shikhariNo nirjhara guNAH" is meant to illustrate how Daya Devi is present. Specifically, Svami Desikan states here that Daya Devi is present in the form of copious streams of water flowing from the mountains of Venkatam. In a prior verse, Svami Desikan alluded to Daya Devi in terms of the streams flowing from the Venkatam hill through the salutation "vAridhAra visheShaiH". In this verse, Svami Desikan completes the analogy by

making a one-to-one association between the characteristics of the streams and Daya Devi. It is common practice to describe something that cannot be visualized in terms of something that can and establish the equivalence. For example, those of us who have never visited USA but want to know how cold the weather gets in the winter, can readily relate to the statement that it is ten times as cold as the winter in New Delhi. Thus, those who have experienced the New Delhi winter can imagine how cold the winter is in the USA. In a like manner, Svami Desikan expounds on the characteristics of Daya Devi, which cannot be perceived directly, in terms of the characteristics of the streams at the Venkatam Hill which can be readily seen. In the process, Svami Desikan provides a comparison of between Daya Devi and the water streams at the Venkatam hill. The streams at the Venkatam hill flow torrentially all the time without exception. The flow of the streams is so forceful that it washes away any dirt that sticks firmly to the ground. Furthermore, the stream waters make no distinction between hills and plateaus. Consequently, they flow uniformly in the same manner, regardless of the terrain. The volume of water flow too remains constant and does not selectively change with the type of terrain. An important point of note is that during the time of Svami Desikan, the water from the streams at the Venkatam hill were flowing constantly without interruption and is hence described as it prevailed at that time. However, due to our papa rAshi, we are only able to behold the flow of these streams selectively (sometimes we may see them and at other times we may not). Thus, the present time does not in any way negate Svami Desikan's outstanding anubhavam. However, even today in some places like Akasha Ganga, and Papavinashani tirtham, the water streams are constantly flowing. For example, in Azhvar tirtham, which adiyen has personally seen, the water from the stream flows for a long time after the rainy season ends. The water flow is torrential here. Furthermore, the water quality is extremely pure. If one engages in snAnam at this place, one can actually experience a heavy load (due to the falling water) on one's head on account of the copious flow of water. The place where the stream lands is pristinely clean since all dirt from the region is washed away due to the torrential flow of water. This phenomenon, which is readily seen by all is used by Svami Desikan to illustrate the flow of Daya Devi. The water streams of the Venkatam hill cleanse the earth of dirt due to the torrential flow. In a like manner, Daya Devi cleanses all Her seekers of their mountainous sin-pile with their roots. It must be remembered that this sin-pile is accumulated over aeons and is impossible to get rid of. The tribute "kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH" denotes the fact that due to the prevalence of Kali, residents of the earth accumulate great sins. However, these are

instantaneously destroyed by the Daya Devi flow. The sambodhanam for Daya Devi from this verse is “padmA sahachara pariShkAriNi kR^ipe” The reference here is Padma (Mahalakshmi Thayar) is constantly by the side of Lord Srinivasa as evidenced by the tribute “akalakillEn iRaiyum enRu alarmElmankai uRai mArbA”. Due to the eternal association with Padma, Lord Srinivasa becomes Nitya Shri - tiruvODukUDu, whereas all other devatas cannot lay claim to this status (tiruvillAtavar). The eternal association with Thayar (shriyaH patitvam) confers a unique status on Lord Srinivasa, which sets Him apart from other devatas. It is helpful to recall Svami NammAzhvar’s tribute “tilatam ulakukkAi ninRa tiruvE~NkaTattemperumAnE” in this context.



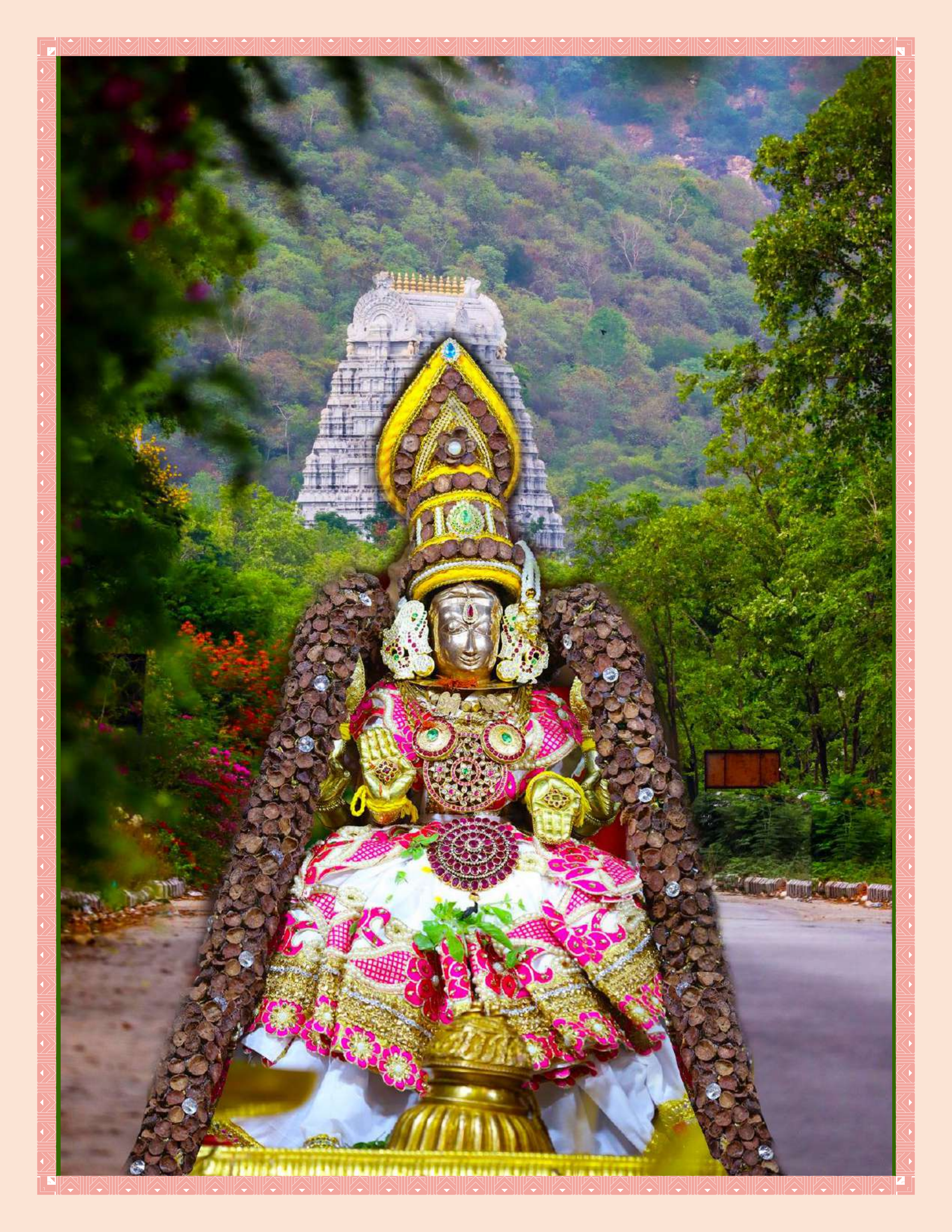
Lord Srinivasa serves as the alankaram for the Venkatam Hill

Lord Srinivasa serves as the alankaram for the Venkatam Hill. Now the alankaram for Him and Thayar needs to be special. This may include a number of ornaments and jewelry. However, these are merely external decorations. In this instance the special alankaram for any person is the guNam. First guNam is ahimsa (a position of non-violence). Next comes sarvabhUta dayA (compassion for all beings). Then

follows indriya nigraham (control of the senses), kShama (forgiveness), sarvam saha (forbearance), and dAnam (charity). These are the eight varieties of flower offering preferred by Lord Narayana as documented in the Bhagavadgita. These are the eight guNams that embellish a person. Likewise, when it comes to Lord Srinivasa, the special alankaram for Him comes about on account of His innumerable and limitless kalyANa guNams (auspicious qualities). No matter, what vajra, vaiDUrya, and kirITa adorn Lord Srinivasa and regardless of how dazzling the ornaments, Lord Srinivasa shines forth resplendently entirely on account of His kalyANa guNams. These include, mAdhuryam (sweetness), gAmbhiryam (majesty), vAtsalyam (unconditional love like that of a cow for its calf). Svami Desikan makes the analogy that these auspicious qualities could be viewed as ornaments. After the Lord has adorned Himself with these, Daya Devi serves as the tilakam on His forehead, which renders a sense of completion to all His decoration. The inner meaning is that the Lord would be lacking bereft of the Daya-Devi adornment on His forehead even though the other kalyANa guNams are dazzling in their own right. Thus, the tilakam denoted by Daya Devi confers loftiness to Lord Srinivasa. Hence, Daya Devi serves as the crown jewel for alankarams in this context as evidenced by the tribute "padmA sahachara pariShkAriNi kR^ipe". A common world example to illustrate the sense of completeness of alankaram conferred by Daya Devi is provided in the context of cooking food for neivedyam. After the delicacies are prepared, the final step includes the seasoning that is added to enhance the taste. This is the role of Daya Devi with regards to alankaram for Lord Srinivasa. This merely narrated by adiyen with the intent of illustrating the elevated role of Daya Devi. However, this mundane illustration is not to be associated directly with Daya Devi or attributed to Svami Desikan. Why does Daya Devi beget the status of tilakam as alankaram for Lord Srinivasa? It is entirely due to Her actions documented in the tribute of this verse "kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH" (She roots out all the sins that cling on to Her seekers. This task is rendered onerous due to the work of Kali, which causes indulgence in sinful acts.) Here it may be asked "kShobhon" (denoting confusion) apply to every yugam, what is so special about Kali? In the dvApara yugam, Arjuna enquires of Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita "kArpaNya doShopahatasvabhAvaH pR^icChAmi tvAM dharmasammUDhacetAH yacChreyaH syAnnishchitaM brUhi tanme shiShyaste(a)haM shAdhi mAM tvAM prapannam" (Oh Lord KrishNa! I have the dosham of karpanyam (inability). I do not know if I can engage in war with these many near and dear ones. Bhishma, my grandfather, Drona, my Acharya are in the adversary army. How could I wage war against them? Even if I become victorious,



is the enjoyment of kingdom gained by killing revered ones worth the price? On the other hand, I am known as a valorous one who is skilled in archery. If I withdraw from this war, would I not be forever carrying the stigma of retreat from a pivotal war? Therefore, I am unable to make the distinction between dharma and adharma. Submitting my weakness to You, I request You through a formal surrender to accept me as Your disciple.) While this is no doubt true of other yugams, the magnitude and frequency of such confusions increase several-fold in Kaliyugam. In the Mahabharata, there is a moksha dharma prakaraNam (documentation), wherein it is stated "tatha kaliyuge prApte chaturyuga paryaye alpa toyAH tatho meghAH alpatasya vasundhara" (In kaliyugam, rainfall will be scarce, and even when it rains, the waters will not be in large volume. The growth of crops on the earth as a result will be diminished.) The salutation continues "alpakShIrA tatho gAvaH alpavIryAshcha brAhmaNAH" (The yield of milk from cows will be reduced so too would the radiance of Brahmanas). This needs to be contrasted with Sri Andal's "vaLLal perumpacukkaL" tribute, wherein She declares that the yield of milk from the cows at Gokulam during the time of Lord Krishna was plentiful so much so that there was a shortage of storage containers. Unlike this, the yield of milk in Kaliyugam will be limited. Even in adiyen's own lifetime, we have witnessed a decline in the yield of milk. Forty years back, adiyen's thayar would milk the cow after being kicked by the cow a lot but would bring back a lot of milk. However, now the yield is not as plentiful. When this is observed over a span of forty years, what to speak of the decline in yield over aeons of time? The radiance of Brahmanas too will be greatly diminished as documented in the Mahabharata salutation. Furthermore, in keeping with the Mahabharata salutation "nivR^itta yaj~nAH svAdhyAya pinDodhaka vivarjitAH anadhyAyeShu dhIyante brAhmaNAH sauca varjitAH" (BrahmaNas will give up the performance of yajnyas. Even if this be so at least they can engage in Veda adhyayanam. However, even this will not be possible. Not only that they will readily give up the prescribed acts of shraddham, which involve the offering of pinda and water. There will also be violations in the form of undertaking the study of scriptures during forbidden times and lack of study during the prescribed times.) There will be a further decline of norms. Also the Mahabharata documents in the salutation "agnihotrArcha shidanti guru pUjA praNashyati" that there will be a decline in agnihotram and a stoppage in salutation of Acharyas. One may ask, how are these relevant in day-to-day life? Is there something that impacts this? This is answered in the Mahabharata salutation "na shR^iNvanti pituH putrAH na snuShA na sahodharaH na bhrutya na kaLatrANi bhaviShyati adharottaram"(Children will not heed the words of their



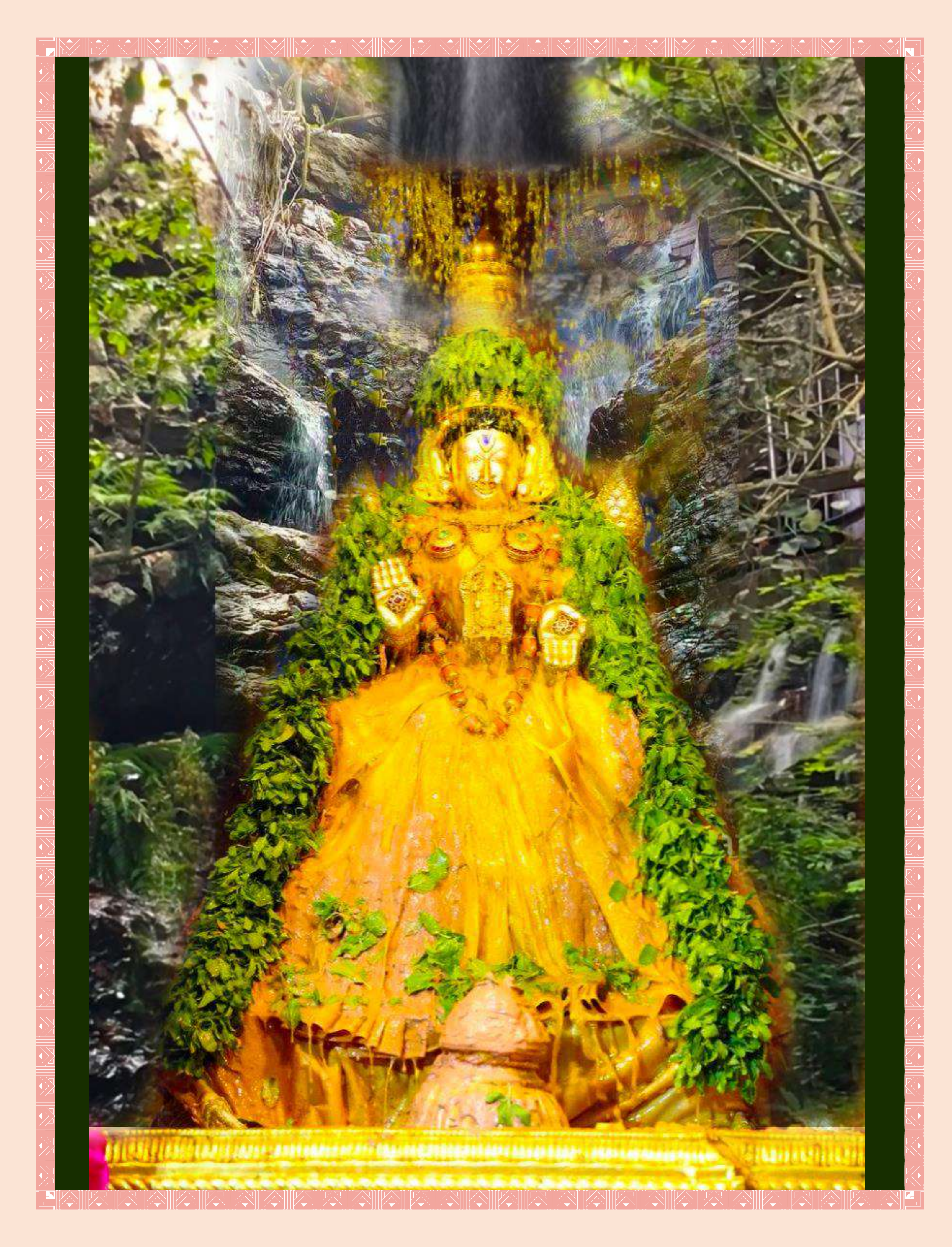
father. They would respond with the statement “Father you belong to a different generation and thus cannot relate to this matter. I know this quite well. Therefore, please do not intervene in this matter.” This is the lot of children. Now examining the position of daughters-in-law they respond with the argument “Your own son does not heed your words. How could I be expected to follow them?” Brothers and sisters would not heed one’s words. Even servants, who render service would not behave in accordance with their role. Moreover, one’s wife would not heed their words.) The summary of the Mahabharata tributes is captured by Swami Desikan through the usage “kali kShobhon” in this Daya Satakam verse. This “kali kShobhon” leads to a total disregard for elders and an end to the practice of seeking sagely advice from wise elders, enriched by experience. In the SharaNagati Deepika verse “kartavyamityanukalaM kalayAmya kR^ityaM svAminnakR^ityamiti kR^ityamapi tyajAmi anyadvayatikramaNa jAtamanantamartha sthAne dayA bhavatu te mayi sArvabhaumI” (Thinking of forbidden acts as required acts, I engage in them quite vigorously. I readily give up the prescribed acts under the pretext that they can be given up.) Svami Desikan describes the egregious violation of the Lord’s commands on his part. However, Lord Deepaprakasha exudes compassion despite these violations. The acts that are prescribed and those that are forbidden deserve to be examined further. Svami Bhashyakarar documents in the Gadya Trayam salutation, five kinds of forbidden acts in increasing order of seriousness “manovAk kAyaiH anAdikAla pravR^iutta anantha akR^itya karaNa kR^itya akaraNa bhagavad apachAra bhAgavatApachAra asahyApacAra rUpa nAnAvidhAnanta apAchara”. The salutation “manovAk kAyaiH anAdikAla pravR^iutta” denotes the fact that these transgressions have not come about in the past day or two but have prevailed over aeons as a consequence of actions arising from the mind, body, and speech. Next “akR^itya karaNa kR^itya akaraNa” (Engaging in forbidden acts and giving up prescribed acts) are examined. For this it is useful to gain an understanding of “kR^ityam” and “akR^ityam”. In keeping with the statement “kR^ityam svavarNAshramAdi” DharmAnushtanam becomes kR^ityam (something that must be followed). That which is opposed to varNAshrama dharmam becomes akR^ityam. We are constantly engaged in “akR^ityam”. Specifically, we are required to perform Veda adhyayanam. However, we readily give up this duty and engage in forbidden tasks. In conformance with the SharaNAgati DIpika tribute “kR^ityamapi tyajAmi” we readily give up the prescribed tasks. For example, we do not have the requirement to gain large amount of wealth. If one is engaged in one’s prescribed duties, Lord Narayana will ensure that there will be enough wealth for the individual to sustain himself.

However, our reasoning is that those engaged in adhyayanam do not have a future. Therefore, we actively discourage our children from adopting the means of Veda adhyayanam. Thus, under the pretext (on flimsy grounds) that this should not be engaged in, we give up the important duty of Veda adhyayanam. Thus, we cause our offspring to seek alternative careers. Not only that we too actively seek those means. This is engaged as "anukalam" (not just for a day or so but as a matter of routine practice). This is merely one example. In a like manner, there are numerous such violations. Next, when it comes to "anyadvayatikramaNa jAtamanantamartha" we repeatedly engage in violations of this type leading to an accumulation of Bhagavad apacharam and BhAgavata apacharam. Nevertheless, even for us of such disposition, Lord Deepa Prakasha's Daya, which functions as the Empress of the universe, comes to our rescue by correcting this errant behavior and causing us to come back on the right path. Likewise in the context of this Daya Satakam verse "kali kShobhon" refers to the confusion resulting from Kali. However, the tendency is to blame Kali even for things that are very much under one's control. It is very easy to lament that the time is very bad and Kali is responsible for all the atrocities that come about. In the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram Svami Desikan describes the fact that at the time of performance of SharaNAgati, all karma that is yet to yield results (known as sanchita karma) is destroyed. Only the karma that has begun yielding consequences pertaining to the sharaNAgata's present birth continues on. Additionally, Svami Desikan also treats the issue of sins that accrue after performance of sharaNAgati. Those sins that are unknowingly committed do not bear any consequences. Those that are knowingly engaged in, will result in light punishment during the lifetime of the sharaNAgata. This can be in the form of loved ones not heeding the words of the sharaNAgata or it can cause the loss of eyesight, or limbs. Thus, these consequences come about as a result of sins committed willfully. Upon hearing this, one of adiyen's friends remarked "We are seeing before our very eyes the fact that loved ones do not heed our words. Since we have performed sharaNAgati at the feet of Acharya, and since we have been taught that sins knowingly committed will yield fruits in this manner during our lifetime, it is certain that our Prapatti has been successful and that we will be guaranteed moksham at the end of our life." However, the tendency is to attribute all of one's sinful actions to Kali. In this context, the salutation "kali kShobhon" denotes the fact that the yugam of Kali facilitates an increase in sinful tendencies. For example, if one is given to a sinful disposition, the yugam of Kali would encourage the individual to engage in more of the same. The tribute "kShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH" of this Daya Satakam verse indicates that the torrential flow

of Daya Devi exterminates the sinful tendencies that are deeply entrenched on the earth as a result of "kali kShobhon" at their very root. This is in the manner of the powerful flow of a copious waterfall, that sweeps away all dirt on the earth in its wake. However, not everything that is associated with Kali yugam is necessarily bad. One need not regret that that one is born in this Kali yugam which offers fertile breeding ground for exacerbating evil tendencies. This is evidenced in the statement "kalou kR^ita yugam tasya kaliH tasya kR^ite yuge yasya cetasi govinda hR^idaye yasya na acyutaH" (For one who is engaged in constant contemplation of Govinda, the yugam of Kali is verily transformed into Krita yugam. For one born in Krita yugam, bereft of the thought of Achyuta, even Krita yugam verily becomes Kali yugam.) Kali yugam has a few salient benefits as evidenced in the declaration "dhyAyan kR^ite yajan yaj~naiH tretAyAm dvAparayArchayan yadApnoti tadApnoti kalau sankIrtya keshavam" (The benefit of unceasing contemplation on Lord Narayana gained through dhyAnam in Krita yugam, the benefit of undertaking yagams in Treta yugam, the benefit of performing archanai to Lord Narayana in DvApara yugam, can be gained very easily in Kali yugam by mere recitation of the names of Keshava.)



This is further illustrated in the salutation “kaleH doShanidhe rAjan asti eko mahAguNaH kIrtana deva kR^iShNasya mukta bandhaH param vrajet” (While the yugam of Kali has several flaws, it has one significant good trait. Mere recitation of the names of Lord Krishna confers the boon of destruction of one’s sins and helps them attain the elevated state of Muktha.) The tribute “sarveShAm kila dharmANAm uttamo vaiShNavo vidhiH rakShate bhagavAn viShNuH bhaktAn Atma sharIravat” discusses the loftiness of the Vaishnava following. (Among the numerous Dharmas that are in existence, the way of the Vaishnava is supreme. Singing the praise of Lord Narayana, contemplating on His glory, reciting the stotrams of purvacharyas, engaging in kalakshepam, performance of sharaNAgati at Lord Narayana’s feet are all part of the Vaishnava vidhi. Those who adopt this path are guaranteed of protection by Lord Narayana.) The way such protection comes about needs to be understood in a simple-to-relate manner. In the era of computers, it is very easy for a message to get garbled in transmission or to be lost in cyberspace. However, in this instance the perspective is presented in an unambiguous and readily understood manner. The Lord’s protection comes about in the same manner as one safeguards one’s body. Tirumangai Azhvar in the Ciriya TirumaDal declares “erAr muyalviTTukkAkaipin pOvatE” (Since Tirumangai Azhvar was a king, he knew the different tastes of meat. Thus, in this Pasuram, he states that it is equivalent to chasing a crow instead of a rabbit. The latter’s meat is quite tasty but the former is not palatable at all. The reference here is to the fact that the Archa murti is like the rabbit. Forsaking this and chasing Sri Vaikuntam is like the act of giving up rabbit meat for a crow’s meat. This is a case in point of presenting a message in a context that is unique and can be readily understood.) Likewise, in this instance, the Lord’s protection is illustrated in a readily understood manner of protecting one’s own body. Svami Desikan treats the subject of gaining Moksham at length in Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, wherein he cautions that mere recitation of the name Rama, Krishna, Narayana, does not grant Moksham. Instead, it paves the way for one to adopt the means documented in the Vaishnava vidhi (performance of sharaNAgati) to gain Moksham. The destruction of the sins coming about on account of “kali kShobhon” by the torrential flow of Daya Devi, verily transforms kali yugam to Krita yugam. The motivation for this Daya Satakam verse lies in the TiruvAimozhi pasuram “polika polika polika pOyiRRu valluyir cApam naliyum narakamum nai~nta namanukkinku yAtonRumillai kaliyum keDum kaNDu koNmin kaDalvaNNan pUtankal maNmEl maliya pukunticai pADi ADi uzhitara kaNDOm” . The poliga poliga poliga tribute is a reflection of the Vedam tribute “shAnti shAnti shAntiH”. This is the mangalasasanam for Lord Narayana by



Bhagavatas. Nithyasuris from Sri Vaikuntam descend to the earth to witness this sight. This is particularly appropriate for Lord Srinivasa. There is a constant crowd of Bhagavatas, who throng in large numbers to gain a darsanam of Lord Narayana. All of them are engaged in reciting the Govinda namam by way of mangalasasanam for Lord Srinivasa in the spirit of the "kalou sa~NkIrtya keshavaH" tribute. The reference here is specific to sharaNAgatas, who gather in large numbers to offer mangalasasanam to Lord Srinivasa. Rather than going alone by oneself, the company of Bhagavatas rushing to gain a darsanam of Lord Srinivasa offers a unique experience. As a result, Svami Nammazhvar declares "pOyiRRu valluyir cApam". The cApam (curse) here is a reference to "avidya" (nescience) and karma vAsana. These are destroyed as a consequence. False knowledge leading one to believe in the permanence of the material world and striving to increase their accumulation of material comforts is the implication here. It is important to note the difference between shApam (curse) and pApam. The consequences of the former have to necessarily be endured in order to be redeemed, whereas the latter can be overcome through performance of prAyashchittam. However, the greatness of the Venkatam hill comes about due to the fact that a mere visit to the hill destroys both the shApam and pApam. This again comes about entirely on account of Daya Devi. What happens as a result of this act of Daya Devi? There is no work to do for Yama in Narakam (hell)! The inner meaning is that Bhagavatas, who visit the Venkatam hill are freed of their curses and their sins on account of the grace of Lord Srinivasa coming upon them due to Daya Devi. It must be remembered that the torrential flow of Daya Devi destroys the sins of these Bhagavatas at their very roots. Thus, these Bhagavatas are freed from sins once and for all. Consequently, they do not have to endure residence in naraka lokam resulting in Yama's joblessness! This is the import of the tribute "naliyum narakamum nai~nta" of Svami Nammazhvar. The salutatation "kaliyum keDum" refers to the fact that Kali offers fertile breeding ground for sinful behavior. It may remembered that the kAla visesham for Kali is described in the salutation "apUjyastra pujyaste pUjyasyatra avamAnitAH tatra trINI vardhante durbikShaM maraNaM bhayam" (Unworthy ones are offered worship, whereas those that need to be respected- great seers, Acharyas, learned ones and the like are treated with gross disrespect and insulted. Three things flourish as a result- a state of abject penury, death, and fear.) However, the torrential flow of Daya Devi which roots out the sins, also destroys the evils inherent to Kali as described by Svami Nammazhvar. This is reflected in the tribute "kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. It may be enquired if the Svami NammAzhvar is referring to Sri Vaikuntam as

the place where one is bereft of sins. However, this is answered by the Azhvar salutation of "maNmEl" (on this earth), which is a direct reference to the Venkatam hill. This is reflected in the "etaiH" tribute of the present Daya Satakam verse and attests to the fact that this can be seen through the copious water streams flowing from the Venkatam hill, which wash away hard-to-expunge dirt that is adhering firmly to the earth. The Azhvar salutation "maliya pukundicai pAdi aDi uzhitara kaNDOm" refers to the fact that cleansed of sins in the manner described above, we behold the joyous glorification of Lord Narayana by these Bhagavatas reflecting a Sri Vaishnava samR^iddhi (fulfillment/completeness). Normally, such an instance would be viewed as a gathering of Srivaishnavas adorned in the traditional attire, wearing the 12 tiruman symbols on their body, displaying the hallmark of samashrayaNam, engaged in rendering Acharya Shri sUktis, which glorify Lord Narayana. In the instance of Lord Srinivasa, it denotes the Bhakta samR^iddhi. During Brahmotsavam for Lord Srinivasa for example, the galleries in the mADa veethis would be overflowing with scores of Bhaktas lining up for darsanam. These Bhaktas throng to the Venkatam hill with the firm belief that they are assured of the grace of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. It is well known that the Lord never spurns Bhaktas, who have this firm conviction. This is due to the fact that Lord Srinivasa is hailed as the pratyakSha (readily perceived) daivam (deity) reflecting the tribute "kalau VenkaTa nAyakaH" This is reflected in the tribute "kali kShobhon mIlatkShiti kaluSha kUla~NkaSha javaiH anuchcChedaiH" Here another question comes up. Is the cleansing of sins coming about due to the grace of Daya Devi a one-time act or is it constant for all time? Svami Desikan answers it again through the analogy of the water streams. More precisely, just like the water streams flowing from the Venkatam hill are replete with copious water flow regardless of the season (summer, rainy season, autumn, winter, and spring) cleanse the dirt adhered firmly to the earth, the torrential Daya flow too is constant regardless of the time/day/season and unfailingly cleanses Bhaktas of their sins. This is reflected in the tribute "anuchcChedaiH" of the present Daya Satakam verse, capturing the fact that the torrential flow of Daya Devi brooks no stopping by obstacles and is always existent. We may lament that in the present time of Kali, there is a decline in Bhakti and people's inclination towards anything to do with Bhagavan. However, if one visits the Divya Desams in Tamil Nadu, one only witnesses an increase in the crowd of Bhaktas eagerly thronging to the Temple to gain a Darsanam of Lord Narayana. Tirumala no doubt is always crowded. However, during the time of SaRRumuRai Sevai, Sri Vaishnavas in svarUpam can gain entry and have a beautiful darsanam. However, to gain a darsanam of Lord Ranganatha in the face of the large



crowds becomes a daunting challenge. The reason for these massive crowds is undoubtedly Daya Devi, whose constant flow ensures a brimming presence of Bhaktas at the Divya Desams. Next the glorification "etaiH avaTa taTa vaiShamya rahitaiH" from this verse of the Daya Satakam is examined. This salutation is intended to address the concerns of those who may think of themselves to be extremely lowly in status and thus may wonder if they can be privy to the grace of Daya Devi. For example, one may wonder "Svami Desikan's sharaNAgati Deepikai tribute kartavyamityanukalaM kalayAmya kR^ityaM svAminnakR^ityamiti kR^ityamapi tyajAmi anyadvayatikramaNa jAtamanantamartha sthAne dayA bhavatu te mayi sArvabhaumI is meant exclusively for me. I am notorious for readily giving up the prescribed acts and take vicarious delight in engaging in forbidden acts under the pretext that these are mandatory. I may hear the upanyasam and wonder for a moment that I should give up these evil tendencies and reform myself. However, I cannot guarantee that I will reform and turn a new leaf. Come tomorrow, I would again resort to my familiar routine of engaging in sinful acts. If I look to see whether there is even an iota of good quality in me, I am unable to find it. Given this pitiable condition of mine, would Daya Devi grace me?" It is reasonable to expect Daya Devi to grace one that has a trace of goodness in them, which causes them to adopt the means prescribed by the shastras and engage in acts that please Lord Srinivasa (Aj~na kaimkaryams and anuj~na kaimkaryams). However, for one bereft of any goodness would the grace of Daya Devi prevail? Svami Desikan answers this question in the salutation "avaTa taTa vaiShamya rahitaiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. The water streams at the Venkatam hill make no distinction in the type of terrain (hills, valleys, or plateaus) that they flow upon. The torrential flow of these water streams cleanses the earth of dirt that adheres firmly. Likewise, Daya Devi makes no distinction on who comes out to seek Her grace. They may be the worst sinners. However, if they come to the place where She flows (Venkatam hill), She unfailingly graces them. As far as Daya Devi is concerned She makes no distinction on the basis of caste, creed, affiliation, gender, illiterate or extremely learned, wealthy or poor, one who has performed several acts of puNya or one who has sinned greatly. She uniformly graces all Her seekers with the torrential flow. Thus, in the eyes of Daya Devi all Her seekers are equal. The tribute " analpA" from this Daya Satakam verse refers to the copious flow of the Daya Devi stream much in the same manner as the water streams at the Venkatam hill. For example, at Azhvar teertham, one of the waterbodies at the Venkatam hill, supporting chains are provided for the purpose of assisting in performance of snanam due to the strong currents caused by the torrential flow of



water. The Daya Devi stream too is plentiful, overflowing, torrential, and lofty. This is captured in the salutation "vR^iSha shikhariNo nirjhara guNAH" of this Daya Satakam verse. Here a question arises. Is the Venkatam hill the place of residence for the water streams or for Daya Devi? Does Daya Devi cleanse us of our sins or would the water streams take care of this? Who then should be resorted to for the purpose of destruction of one's sins-the water streams or the Daya flow? This is answered again by Svami Desikan through the tribute "vikalpante(a)nalpA" (vikalpante denotes tulya phalam or non-difference of benefit granted by the water stream and the Daya stream of the present Daya Satakam verse. Therefore, it makes no difference whether one resorts to the water stream or the Daya stream. They both yield identical benefits. The only difference is that the water streams at the Venkatam hill are visible but the Daya flow remains invisible. Thus, by making the analogy of Daya Devi flow, which remains invisible, to the water stream, which is readily perceived, Svami Desikan motivates us to resort to Daya Devi for destruction of our sins at their root, caused by Kali and render us as fitting receptacles for the grace of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, one need not have any regret for being born in the Kaliyugam and lament on their lowly status given to a sinful disposition. The pratyakSha Daivam for Kaliyugam, (kalau Ve~NkaTa nAyaka) Lord Srinivasa, stands ready to grant Moksham. In keeping with Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram glorification "viNNavarum maNNavaram virumpum verpE", this Daya Satakam verse instructs us to seek refuge at the Venkatam hill which is resorted to by inhabitants of the

earth as well the Nityasuris of Sri Vaikuntam. Mere beholding the sight of the Bhagavata samR^iddhi caused by the overflowing crowd of Bhagavatas replete with absolute faith in Lord Srinivasa is sufficient to destroy our sins and curses due to the paripUrNa kaTAkSham of Daya Devi. This message illustrated by Svami Desikan through the equivalence between Daya Devi and the water streams at the Venkatam hill is the import of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, seeking the grace of Daya Devi to destroy our sins at their roots, for which Acharya anugraham is essential, and seeking the grace of Svami Desikan, who revealed this path to us, so that we may be filled with Bhakti for Lord Srinivasa, Daya Devi and Svami Desikan, we conclude this exposition. ”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patracharíar Svamin:

“Svami Desikan relishes the equivalence between the Daya floods and the forceful water falls at the Venkatam hill. We readily see the streams like Akashaganga, Papavinashini etc. relieve us of the heat and sweat. They also destroy our sins. Hence, they are like the Ganga river in this regard. Svami Desikan uses the concept of vikalpa - equality, replaceability, or interchangeability to make his point.

Oh Daya Devi! You are the jewel bedecking Lord Srinivasa much like his consort Padma. The huge mounds of sin-dirt that the Kali age hoards (with respect to all of us) are all shattered, washed away and nullified by Your floods just as a bank shattering flood stream of the perennial water fall on the Venkatam hill. I would assert that whether it be the natural waterfalls or Your flow, the effect is the same. Our sins are washed away without distinction or discrimination between high and low-a beautiful parallelism; a set of two equal alternatives for sin removal.



Slokam 70

खिलं चेतोवृत्तेः किमिदमिति विस्मेरभुवनं

कृपे सिंहक्ष्माभृत्कृतमुखचमत्कारकरणम् ।

भरन्यासच्छन्नप्रबलवृजिनप्राभृतभृतां

प्रतिप्रस्थानां ते श्रुतिनगरशृङ्गाटकजुषः ॥ ७० ॥

khilaM ceto vR^itteH kimidamiti vismera bhuvanaM

kR^ipe siMhakShamAbhR^itkR^itamukhacamatkAra karaNam|

bharanyAsacChannaprabalavR^ijinaprAbhR^itabhR^itaaM

pratiprasthAnAM te shrutinagarashR^i~NgATakajuShaH||70





Daya Devi guarantees the lofty benefit of moksham to those seeking it and also grants material benefits to those that seek them.

We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now commence the exposition on verse 70 which is "khilaM ceto vR^itteH kimidamiti vismera bhuvanaM kR^ipe siMha kShamAbhR^it kR^itamukha camatkAra karaNam bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^ita bhR^itAM pratiprasthAnAM te shruti nagara shR^i~NgATaka juShaH" This entire decad (verses 61-70) glorifies Daya Devi's loftiness in terms of Her extraordinary upakaram (acts of help) for us.



"Oh kR^ipe!"

In the first verse of this decad Svami Desikan highlights the fact that Daya Devi is greater than limitless svarUpam of Lord Srinivasa due to the fact that She transforms the nigraha sankalpam (Punishment) of Lord Srinivasa into one of anugraham (blessing). In a subsequent verse Svami Desikan documents the fact that Lord Srinivasa is a Paratantran for Daya Devi. As a result, even His light punishment results in something good for the recipient. In another verse, Svami Desikan highlights the fact that due to Daya Devi's doing, the Lord showers His grace on commoners like Guha, Sugriva, Shabari, Kuchela, Trinavakra, the damsels of Vraja, and the garland maker at Mathura to demonstrate His saushIlyam and vAtsalyam. In another verse Svami Desikan exposited on the fact that once an individual performs sharaNAgati, Daya Devi stands ready to come to the rescue. Elsewhere Svami Desikan documents the fact that not only does Daya Devi guarantee the lofty benefit of moksham to those seeking it, She also grants material benefits to those that seek them. Even the elevated positions of Brahma, Rudra, and Indra, are granted to their occupants entirely on account of the grace of Daya Devi.



The kalyANa guNams of Lord Srinivasa gain a sense of completeness only due to their association with Daya Devi. Daya Devi functions as the camphor for the throats of the Veda Rks on account of which they become extremely pure. The Lord has two salient characteristics - one is that He performs the functions of creation, sustenance, and destruction of the universe and the other is that He alone grants moksham. This too is carried out at the behest of Daya Devi. Therefore, She is responsible for Lord Srinivasa's glorification by the Vedas. The previous verse highlighted the fact that the Daya Devi flow destroys all the evils arising due to Kaliyugam and graces Her seekers without distinction of any kind. In this verse the root cause of all the tributes rendered to Daya Devi in this decad is highlighted. The primary reason for this is the fact that Daya Devi destroys all sins. The sambodhanam for Daya Devi in this verse is "Oh kR^ipe!".



The Empress of the Universe!

To understand this verse, it is helpful to make an analogy. Let's say there exists a palace at the intersection of four streets. The palace is replete with inner apartments. The queen, who resides in the palace observes someone that arrives at the intersection of the four streets with a desire to see her. He bears in his hand an offering in a plate that is covered. The queen discerning this welcomes him and ensures that she gets his offering. This analogy will become clear as we delve into the exposition of this verse. The city described in this verse is the majestic city known as the Vedas. The "shR^ingaTakam" tribute of this verse is a reference to the four-street intersection. This denotes the Upanishad section of the four Vedas. The four Vedas denoting the four streets are Rg, Yajus, Sama, and Atharvana. The concluding part of each of these Vedas is the Upanishad section denoted by the intersection. Lord Srinivasa and Thayar are glorified by all the Upanishads. In a prior verse, Svami Desikan has established that it is not Lord Srinivasa but His Daya that

is glorified by the Vedas. The palace at the intersection of the four streets is the residence of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. Next the salutation "bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^ita bhR^itAM" is examined. "bharanyAsacChanna" can be appreciated from the experience of Bhaktas who arrive at the Venkatam hill to offer prostration to Lord Srinivasa. They usually bring something by way of upahAram (food offering) to Lord Srinivasa in a plate that is covered. This would be in the form of dry fruits or coconut ready for offering to Lord Srinivasa. The mADa vIdhis (streets adjoining the Temple) are lined up with these BhAgavatAs. This offering is usually covered by a silk cloth. Only when the Lord arrives do these BhAgavatAs open the covering and submit their offering to Lord Srinivasa. During SaRRumuRai Sevai, it is the routine practice from various Mathams to submit an offering in a covered plate to Lord Srinivasa. Likewise, a person arrives from a remote place carrying a covered plate with an offering for Daya Devi. Now the focus is on what is the silk covering and what is the offering. In the context of this verse, the silk covering on the plate is the act of BharanyAsam. The offering in the plate is the mountainous sin-pile. These sins constituting the sin-pile have been accumulated over aeons and are denoted by sancita pApam. It must be remembered that after innumerable births, we have gotten birth in human form. Given this, the only options for attaining Lord Narayana is the adoption of either Bhakti yogam or Prapatti. This is described by Svami Desikan as sadvAraka prapatti and advAraka prapatti.



Bhakti yogam or Prapatti are the only means of attaining Her

sadvAraka prapatti denotes the performance of sharaNAgati by Bhakti yogam practitioners, which is done before commencing their upasana of Bhakti yogam. The purpose of this sharaNAgati is to ensure successful completion of their upAsana in an obstacle-free manner. advAraka prapatti is meant for those who are unable to adopt the means of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, or bhakti yoga. Instead, they resort to sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana to serve in place of these practices and for having accomplished their arduous prescriptions for obtaining the same benefit as one who has undertaken these means (Bhakti yogi). Thus, Svami Desikan affirms that one who has not adopted the means of sadvAraka prapatti or advAraka prapatti cannot gain moksham as evidenced by his declaration "prapannAd anyesham nadishati mukundaH nija padam". The import of this declaration is that Lord Mukunda does not grant the refuge and bliss of service to His feet to those who have not performed sharaNAgati. That is, they will not have the opportunity to render nitya kaimkaryam in Sri Vaikuntam.



Seek Her Sacred Feet to attain Moksham

The karma accumulated by an individual over aeons comprising innumerable births is of two kinds - prArabdha karma (that which has begun yielding fruit) and sancita karma (that which has not begun yielding fruit). Due to the large number of

sins committed, it is impossible for one to endure concurrently, the consequences for these sins. Thus, it has to be experienced in sequence. Therefore, at the appropriate time (paripaka dashai), one endures the consequences of one's actions (good or bad) in a pre-determined manner. Consequently, what we endure at a given time is the result of karma that has begun yielding fruit. This is known as prArabdha karma. For the practitioners of Bhakti yogam, only the sancita karma is destroyed. However, they have to necessarily endure the consequences of prArabdha karma. The sins committed after the adoption of the practice of Bhakti yogam is termed as uttarakR^itam. If these sins are committed unknowingly (abuddhipUrvakam), there will be no consequences for them. However, if these sins are committed knowingly (buddhipurvakam), there will be some form of light punishment, which would have to be endured in the duration it takes to expend all the prArabdha karma, after which they will be granted moksham. This has been established by Svami Desikan in Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram.

For a sharaNAgata (one who has adopted advAraka prapatti), even the prArabdha karma pertaining to future births in addition to sancita karma are destroyed. The only remaining component is that portion of the prArabdha karma that prevails until the end of the lifespan of the sharaNAgata. This is known as abyupagata prArabdha karma -that which has been agreed to at the time of performing BharanyAsam. Again, the rules pertaining to the consequences of post prapatti sins for the sharaNAgata are similar to that for the Bhakti yogam practitioner. In the context of the offering on a plate covered by the silk cloth, it pertains to the mountainous sin-pile. The covering denotes the act of Bharanyasam. In verse 29 of the Daya Satakam it is helpful to recall Swami Desikan's declaration "mayi tiShTati duShkR^itAM pradhAne mitadoShAnitarAn vicinvatI tvam aparadhagaNaIrapUrNa kukShiH kamalakAnta daye kathaM bhavitrI". (I am the foremost among those who have committed grave sins. Do not look elsewhere, I have the appropriate quota of sins to satiate Your hunger, oh Daya Devi!). Thus, it becomes clear from this tribute that Daya Devi devours the sins of Her seekers. However, Daya Devi has an insatiable appetite for the sins of Her seekers. No matter how mountainous the sin-pile, Daya Devi consumes it as if it were a mere trifle. This same sentiment is echoed in greater detail in this Daya Shatakam verse through the tribute "bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^itabhR^itAM".

When one approaches Daya Devi in the spirit of utter helplessness, unable to undertake any of the prescriptions of karma yogam, j~nAna yogam, and Bhakti yogam, and submits the appeal that Lord Srinivasa's feet are the sole refuge -



Daya Devi ensures the upliftment of the sharaNAgata, who arrives with mahAvishvAsam

seeking the kataksham of Daya Devi is the sole objective, the offering of one's sins is made by way of upaharam to Daya Devi.

The salutation "prabalavR^ijina prAbhR^itabhR^itAM" refers to the fact that the sins are not one or two in number but countless. Their magnitude is not trivial either but remains enormous. This is submitted as the offering of food. This raises the question that any offering of food to the Lord must be tasty, sweet, and fit for consumption. Instead, offering of sins (which is the lowest form of any kind of offering) goes against this principle. To this Svami Desikan answers "One can only submit by way of offering what one has in one's possession. In this case the individual has an abundance of sins to offer."

When Lord Rama took up residence in an Ashramam at the Chitrakuta hill, Bharata arrived with a large retinue with the intent of taking Rama back to Ayodhya. Lord Rama seats Bharata by His side and enquires whether all is well in Ayodhya, whether the treasury is running full and whether Bharata is undertaking all expenses after carefully examining the causes for such expenditure. eka svAdhIna bhunjita is the statement used by Lord Rama to enquire if edible delicacies are being partaken of by a large group rather than a single individual. Finally, Lord Rama enquires if His father Dasharatha is keeping well. Bharata responds that upon Rama's departure to the forest, Dasharatha breathed his last and attained svarga lokam. As a result, Ayodhya has been orphaned. Since Lord Rama was the jyeShTa putran for Dasharatha, he had to submit the offerings of water (udaka dAnam) and other items to the departed mane. Lord Rama performed this as permitted for residents of the forest. The term ingudhi pungyAkam refers to offerings from the trees ingudhi and pungam that are available in the forest. Thus, the declaration "yadanna puruSho bhavati tadannAsvasya devatAH" refers to the fact that Lord Rama offered what was available to Him in the forest by way of submission to the departed pitru. As a king, Lord Rama would have made offerings of piNDam prepared from rice. However, due to its unavailability in the forest, He had to offer what was readily available to Him in the forest. Therefore, Lord Rama used the ingudhi and punga tree offerings for performing shrAddham and tarpaNam. Likewise, in the context of this Daya Satakam verse, one can only offer what one has at one's disposal. In this case it is the abundance of sins.

Hence, this is submitted as the offering of food for Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. This is the import of the tribute "bharanyAsacChanna prabalavR^ijina prAbhR^itabhR^itAM". The offering of sins is done without hesitation. Daya Devi beholds the individual arriving with this offering from the inner apartments of Her



Daya Devi rushes out of Her Palace to meet Her sharaNAgatas.

palace and immediately recognizes what is transpiring. Therefore, while the individual has barely taken a couple of steps, Daya Devi rushes out to meet him. Then follows an astonishing act as described by the salutation "pratiprasthAnAM te shruti nagara shR^i~NgATaka" "te pratiprasthAnAM" is the anvaya kramam (prose order). This act of Daya Devi (coming out of Her palace to receive the sin-pile offering of the sharaNAgata) is met with a look of surprise on the part of the residents of the entire universe as described in the salutation "khilaM ceto vR^itteH kimidamiti vismera bhuvanaM". It must be noted that Daya Devi is the Empress of the entire universe. She never leaves the inner apartments of Her palace as a result. Therefore, let alone leaving the palace, Her arrival at the intersection of the four streets near the palace to receive the sin-pile offering of the SharaNAgata is quite unusual and surprising.

In the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan describes the act of sharaNAgatas of Lord Narayana seeking favors from devatantaras. Specifically, he states that this is akin to a queen taking to streets and begging for alms not even with a begging bowl but with a piece of cloth as described in the salutation "rAja mahiShi madiDipicchai pOkumApOlE". The implication here is that sharaNAgatas of Lord Narayana beget the status of the queen/empress. Is it appropriate for the empress to take to the streets with a cloth and beg for alms? Such is the state of sharaNAgatas of Lord Narayana, requesting protection from devatantaras. This is "avadhyamAm" (inappropriate). In the instance of the present Daya Satakam verse,

the Empress in the palace merely needs to instruct the supplicant to leave the covered offering outside Her palace and ask one of Her attendants to bring this to Her inner apartments. Instead, Daya Devi steps out of the palace to the four-street intersection to accept the offering, which is an unusual act. When Kuchela arrived at the precincts of Lord Krishna's palace, the gatekeepers took one look at him and were wondering who is this man? He does not belong here and must leave immediately. Kuchela pleads his case with the guards and mentions to them that he is a saha-adhyayi of Lord Krishna at the gurukulam of sage Sandipani and all he needs to do is see Lord Krishna for a few minutes. Kuchela further states that he has not come to ask any favors from Lord Krishna. He does not desire to gain wealth or any other material benefit from Lord Krishna. Nevertheless, the guards remain unmoved and firmly respond to Kuchela that Lord Krishna is resting in the inner-apartments of His palace and is therefore inaccessible. However, Lord Krishna who was in the company of Rukmini, saw the arrival of Kuchela from His inner apartments and rushed out to meet Kuchela. Not only that, He had by His side Rukmini, whom He instructed to offer arghyam, padyam, and achamanIyam to Kuchela. It must be observed that Rukmini is dedicated to serving the lotus feet of Lord Krishna and no one else. Thus, it was quite significant that She rendered upacharams to Kuchela. Rukmini performs this in a devout manner using a golden plate and golden bowl filled with water. The reason for Kuchela receiving the upacarams in the said manner as documented in the Srimad Bhagavatam is entirely due to his mahAvishvAsam in Lord Krishna. What did Kuchela bring for Lord Krishna? It is the flattened rice as documented in the VairAgya Pancakam tribute "dhAnamuShTimuce kucelamunaye datte sma vitteshatAm" (For offering a handful of flattened rice to Lord Krishna, Kuchela gained untold wealth). Svami Desikan asks in this tribute "When I have Lord Krishna of such munificence, I do not desire to glorify mere kings for the sake of gaining material wealth." For common folk like us, what is it that we can offer when we go to prostrate before Lord Srinivasa? It is the mountainous sin-pile. However, this is covered by the beautiful silk cloth, known as Bharanyasam as documented in the tribute "bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^ita bhR^itAM pratiprasthAnAM te". Daya Devi rushes out to receive this offering covered by the silk cloth. This is eloquent testimony to the loftiness of BharanyAsam that Daya Devi Herself, giving up all protocol for the Empress, rushes out to receive the offering of the supplicant. It is common practice to offer neivedyam (offering of food) in a shiny vessel covered with a vastram (cloth). The content of the vessel may be lacking in salt, tanginess, and other tastes. However, only Lord Srinivasa knows what is missing. The vessel and the cloth


Daya Devi's vAtsalyam overflows for Her devotees!

covering cause Him to enthusiastically partake of the offering. Andal describes this act on the part of the Lord through the Tiruppavai tribute "pAl sORu mUDa neipeitu muzhankai vazhivAra" (the delicacy of rice cooked in milk, covered by a layer of ghee is the offering to Lord Narayana). As soon as the Lord beholds the covering of ghee, He desires to partake of the offering. Likewise, the silk covering of Bharanyasam causes Lord Srinivasa to accept the offering of the supplicant, in the context of the present Daya Satakam verse. This causes Daya Devi to rush out of the palace to the four-street intersection to receive the offering covered by the silk cloth of Bharanyasam as evidenced by the salutation "bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^itabhR^itAM pratiprasthAnAM te shruti nagara shR^i~NgATaka" of this Daya Satakam verse. The four-street intersection in this case is the Upanishad section of the four Vedas. Some may easily interpret this act of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi as "doSha bhogyatvam" (enjoyer of the offering of sin-piles). Due to this fact it could be viewed as the Lord and Daya Devi having an insatiable appetite for the supplicant's sins and therefore can have the connotation of a license to engage in committing sinful acts. However, there is no room for such an interpretation due to the fact, that Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi destroy the sin-pile of the supplicant thereby ensuring that these do not yield fruit for the sharaNAgata. Hence, it is in no way an implication that the sharaNAgata can continue to vicariously engage in performance of sinful acts. Daya Devi rushing to receive this offering is an indication of the Lord's vAtsalyam (love of a cow for its calf) for the sharaNAgata. In the TirukATkarai pAsuram of the Tiruvaimozhi Svami NammAzhvar declares "vArikoNDu unnai vizhunkuvan kANil enRu arvuRRa ennai ozhiya ennin munnam pArittu tAn ennai muRRa parukinan kAr okkum kATkaraiappan kaDiyanE" Svami NammAzhvar approaches the Lord of TirukATkarai with the intent of enjoying Him by devouring Him. However, the Lord at this Divya Desam would like to enjoy the Azhvar in the same manner. Svamyi NammAzhvar affirms that if the separation between him and the Lord was 100 feet, and if he took steps that brought him ten feet closer, the Lord rushed out and covered the remaining 90 feet to get near the Azhvar. Svami NammAzhvar employs the salutation "kaDiyan" (hard-hearted one) and thus the Lord's position towards such a kaDiyan is even more astonishing, reflecting the Lord's abundant vAtsalyaam. This Daya Satakam verse echoes the sentiment from the Azhvar tribute through the description of Daya Devi rushing out of Her palace to the four-street intersection to accept the sin-pile offering of the sharaNAgata even though, the latter is totally unfit for such a welcome. The reason for this disposition of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi towards the sharaNAgata is the silk covering - BharanyAsam. This act on the

part of Daya Devi is meant exclusively for sharaNAgatas and none else. All others would necessarily have to endure the consequences of their sinful actions. The inner meaning is that the Lord's nirhetuka kR^ipa (inherent mercy) causes Him to destroy the sins of the sharaNAgata as a result of the act of BharanyAsam, which serves as a pretext to invoke the grace of the Lord. However, this does not mean that the Lord enjoys partaking of the sins of sharaNAgata (doSha bhogyatvam). It is merely reflective of the Lord's anxiety to rid the sharaNAgatas of their sins out of His abundant vAtsalyam. Here, there is also a submission of gurudakShiNa to Daya Devi. This is again the offering of the sin-pile due to the fact that one can only offer what is in one's possession. One does not possess the supernatural powers of Lord Krishna, who retrieved the dead son of His Guru, as His Guru dakShina offering.



kR^ipe siMha kShamAbhR^it kR^itamukha camatkAra karaNam

Beholding the act of Daya Devi in Her manner of coming out of Her palace to accept the offering of the sharaNAgata's sin-pile causes Lord Srinivasa great joy as described in the salutation "kR^ipe siMha kShamAbhR^it kR^itamukha camatkAra

karaNam" of this Daya Satakam verse. An important point to be noted here is that the sharaNAgata must have mahAvishvAsam (namely firm belief that Lord Narayana will protect him at all times under all circumstances). Bereft of mahAvishvAsam, the sharaNAgati will not fructify. When offering all the sins committed until the moment one performs sharaNAgati, one needs to have firm belief that Lord Narayana will ensure the destruction of these sins. The mahAvishvAsam with which the sharaNAgata arrives near the palace of Daya Devi causes Her to be greatly moved resulting in overflowing vAtsalyam for the supplicant. The inner meaning is that the manner in which Daya Devi ensures the upliftment of the sharaNAgata, who arrives with mahAvishvAsam, in a state of utter helplessness, and submits their sins by way of offering, greatly pleases Lord Srinivasa. This concludes our exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."



We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin: "It is holy city where four thoroughfares meet in a pivotal position. The center constitutes the Vedic nucleus. The four main roads correspond to the four Vedas. A sentient, a poor individual, is walking towards the junction with a large dish (of edibles) covered with a towel as a manner of etiquette. On seeing him, Daya Devi, walks towards him as a kind of cultural response, which She need not have to do by any means. Her actions surprise witnesses, who are heavenly beings, Muktas, and Nityas. "Why this condescension, excessive courtesy on Her part?" they murmur within themselves. They are not able to believe their eyes. The Lord of the Lion-hill, Sri Srinivasa, who is a great judge and competent connoisseur of human activity, shows His patent admiration of the attitude of Daya Devi. The supplicant has in his hand a dish of his hordes of sins. The cloth covering is a

symbolism for BharanyAsa. He dedicates the sin-meal so to say, to Daya Devi. BharanyAsa is a sanctifying act that extinguishes the Prapanna's sin-heaps. This verse implies that these sins are destroyed as a result of their offering to Daya Devi. A few important points need to be noted here.

1. The Lord swallows all the universe and later recreates it by spitting out. His consuming of the Prapanna's sins is more in a figurative sense.

2. Verse 29 documents the fact that Daya Devi has a voracious appetite for sins and that the offering of other's sins is trivial, whereas Svami Desikan (who is of blemishless conduct) takes it upon himself to offer the large amount of sins that would satiate Daya Devi.

3. The reader needs to be clear about three important issues pertaining to this verse.

a. Is Daya Devi a glutton-ghost-demon to eat all our sin-heaps?

b. Will not Daya Devi, being so merciful, consume all our sins by a mere wish and make us fit for moksha, without necessitating the ritual of Prapatti, however simple and pretext-like it may be?

c. Is it then correct that the Lord or Daya Devi is pleased with our sins and stigmas as to necessitate our dedicating them as food offering? Namely, is doSha-bhogyatva implied?

The answer to all these issues is a resounding NO. Details pertaining to these issues can be found in Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram."





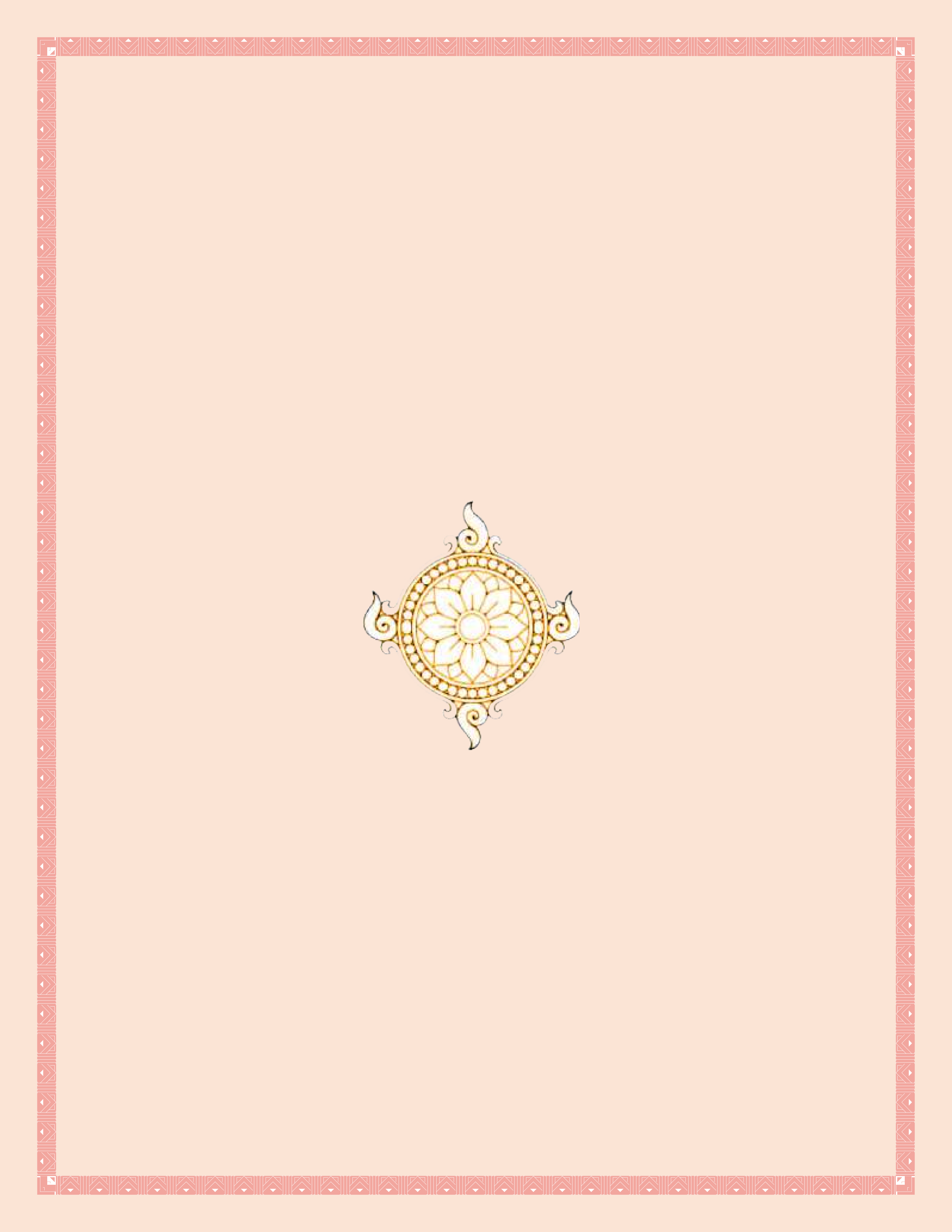

SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 71 – 80)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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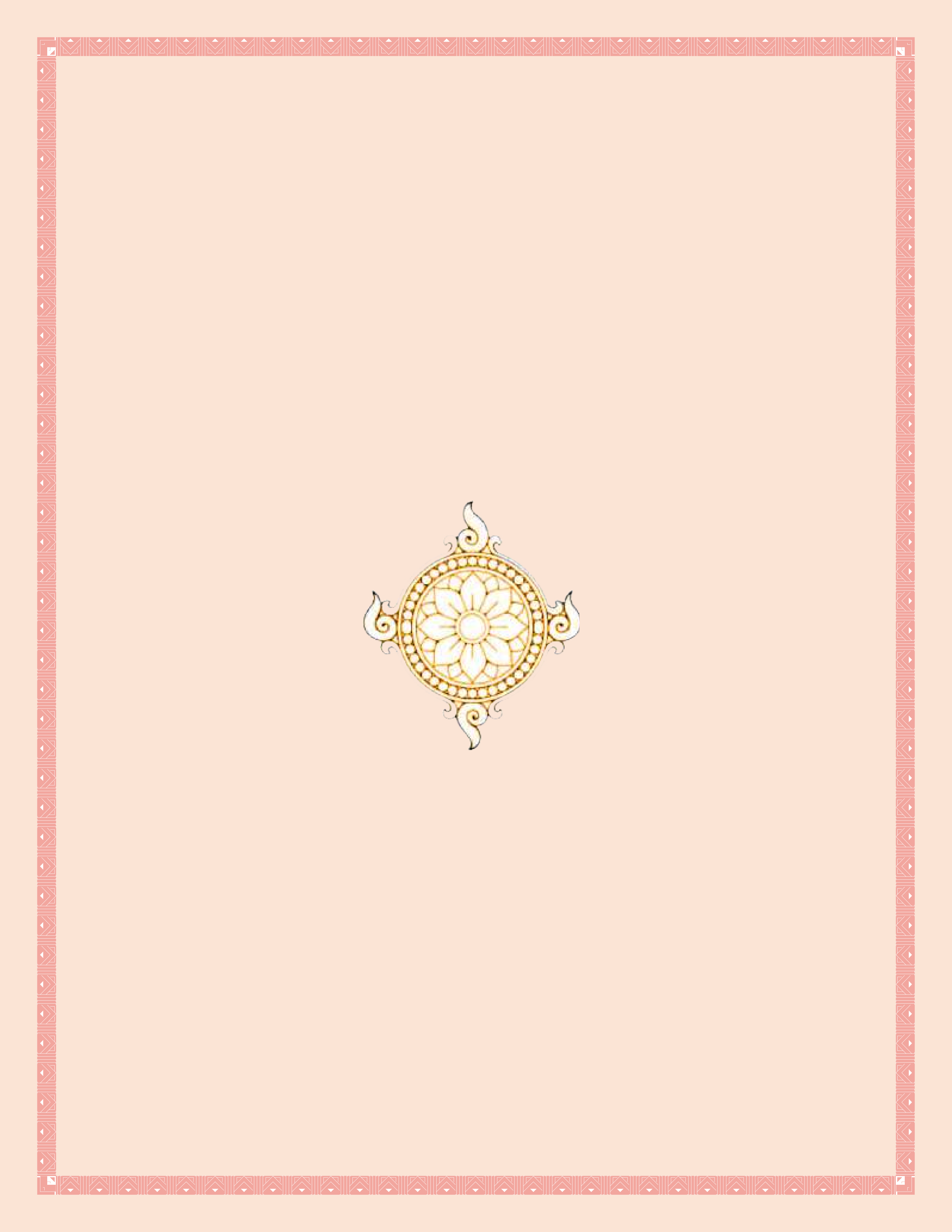
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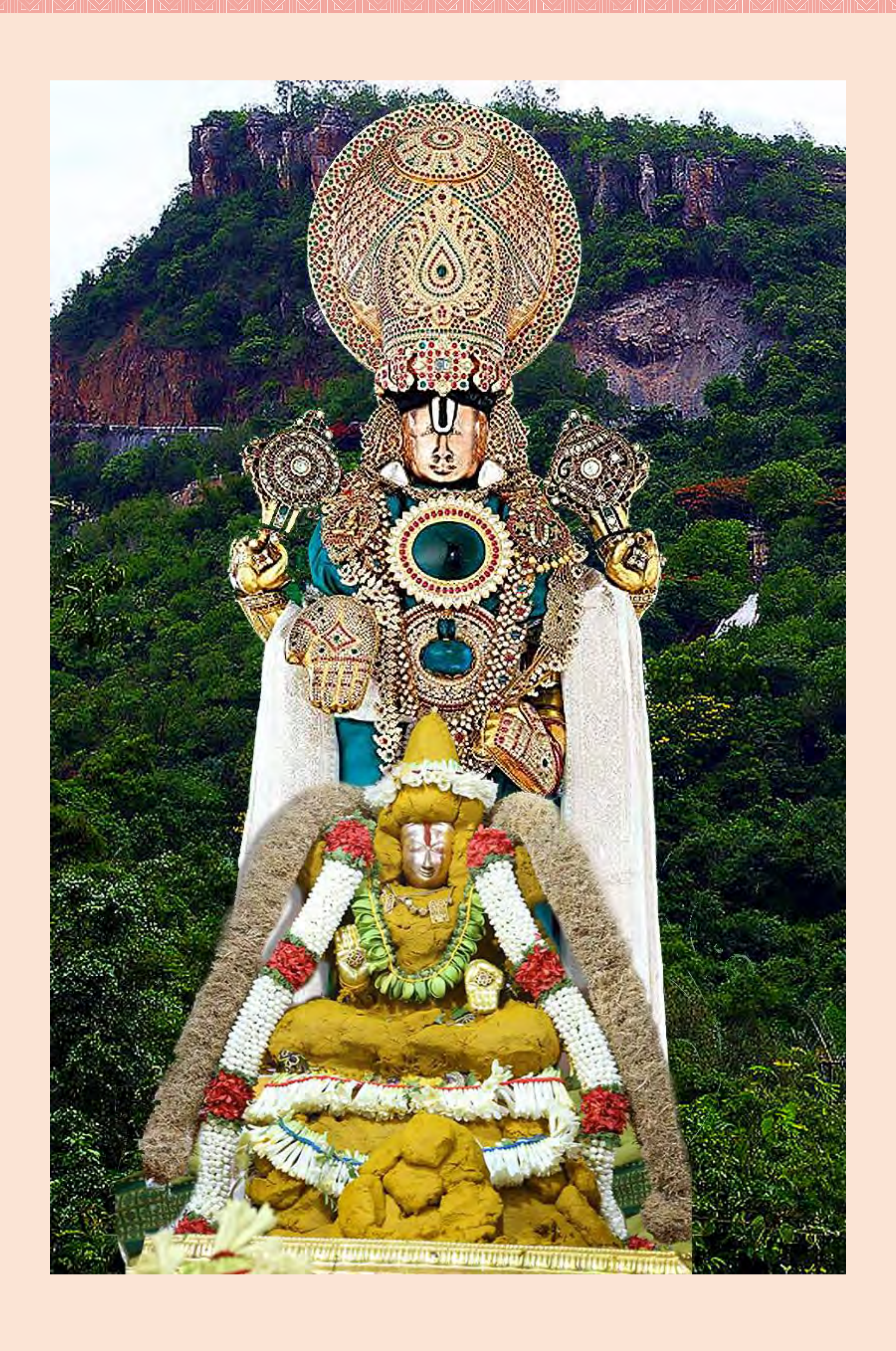


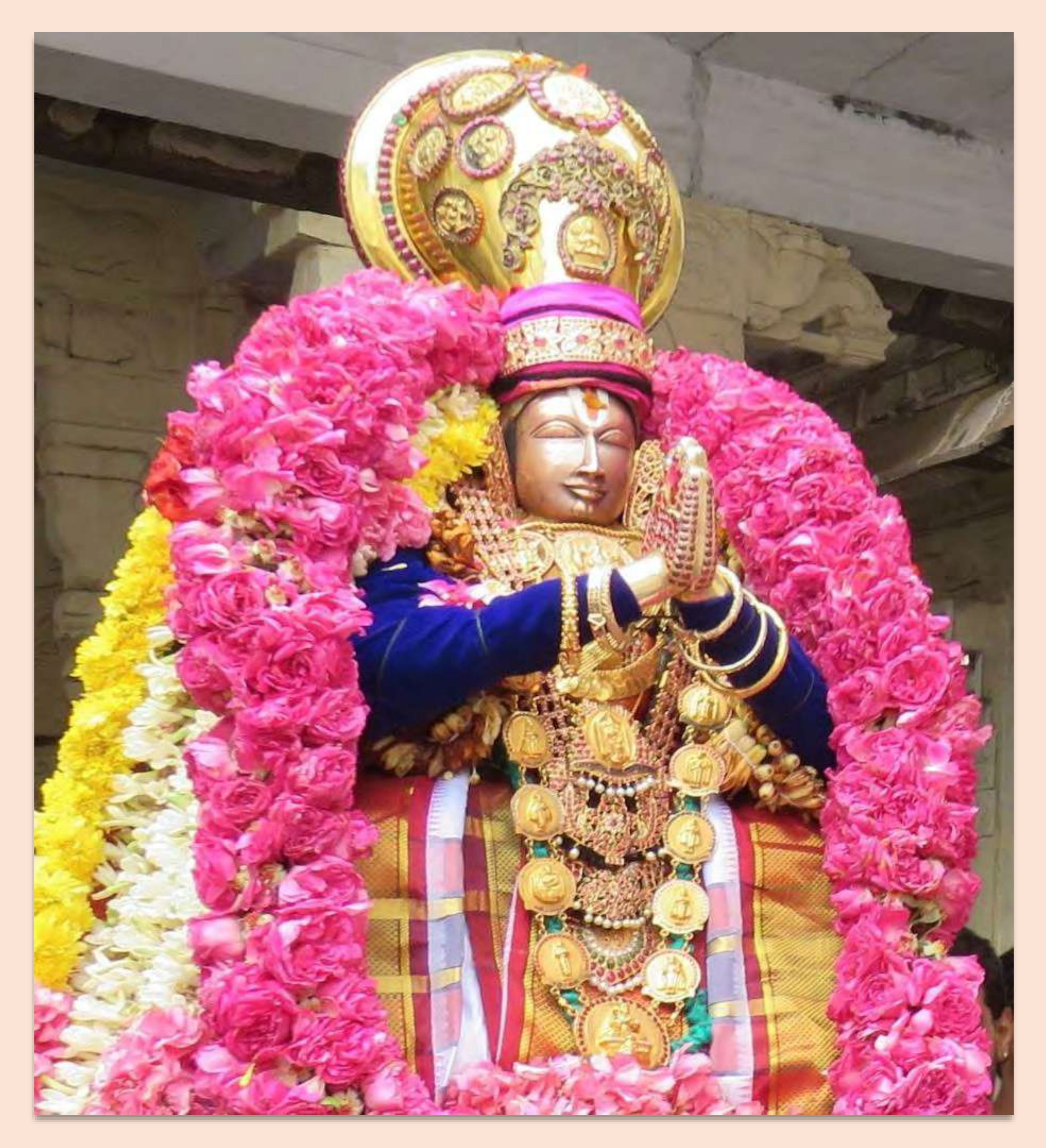
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Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy







SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||

Slokam 71

त्रिविध चिदचित्सत्तास्थेम प्रवृत्ति नियामिका

वृषगिरि विभोरिच्छा सा त्वं परैरपराहता ।

कृपण भरभृत् किङ्कुर्वाण प्रभूत गुणान्तरा

वहसि करुणे वैचक्षण्यं मदीक्षण साहसे ॥ ७१ ॥

trividha cidacitsattAsthema pravR^itti niyAmikA

vR^iShagiri vibhoricChA sA tvaM parairaparAhatA|

kR^ipaNa bharabhR^it ki~NkurvANa prabhUta guNAntarA

vahasi karuNe vaicakShaNyaM madIkShaNa sAhase||71



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "trividha cidacitsattAsthema pravR^itti niyAmikA vR^iShagiri vibhoricChaa sA tvaM parairaparAhatA kR^ipaNa bharabhR^it ki~NkurvANa prabhUta guNAntarA vahasi karuNe vaicakShaNyaM madIkShaNa sAhase." This is the start of the eighth decad of the Stotram. In the sixth decad Svami Desikan highlighted the glory of SharaNAgati in the starting with the verse "athikR^ipaNopi" and concluding with his formal surrender to Daya Devi in verse 60 through the salutation "mR^idhu hR^idaye daye". This literally follows the path revealed by Svami NammAzhvar who performed his formal sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa in the famous 6.10 Pasuram of Triuvaimozhi, "AkalakillEn". In this decad, Svami Desikan describes the glory of Daya Devi as it pertains to Her role in destroying the sins of those who have performed sharaNAgati to Her. The torrential flow of Daya Devi literally washes away the sins of the sharaNAgata. This is described through the fact that until the performance of sharaNAgati, the jivan was subject to imprisonment in samsara (engaging in a seemingly endless cycle of birth and death with no hope for redemption). In this decad, Svami Desikan highlights the role of Daya Devi in ensuring that sharaNAgatas are freed from such imprisonment. The sambodhanam here is "Oh KaruNe!". The tribute "trividha cidacit" refers to the three kinds of sentient and insentient beings - baddha (those that are bound to samsara on account of Karma), mukta (those who were bound to samsara once upon a time but gained redemption either through the adoption of Bhakti yogam or Prapatti),

and nitya (those who are eternal residents of Sri Vaikuntam and never had bondage of any kind and are in constant company of Lord Narayana deriving unending bliss - for example, Ananta, Garuda, Vishvaksena et al.) denoting the sentients and triguNam (prakR^iti - satva, rajas, tamas), kAlam (time), shuddha satvam (that substance which is blemishless that permeates Sri Vaikuntam exclusively) denoting the three kinds of insentient ones. The salutation "sattAsthema pravR^itti" represents the existence (lifetime), inherent nature (form and disposition), and activities of these three kinds of sentient and insentient beings. This is discussed by Svami Bhashyakarar in the SrIVaikuNTha Gadyam tribute "svAdhIna trividha cetanAcetana svarUpa sthiti pravaR^itti bhedam". All these are determined by Lord Narayana as noted by Svami Bhashyakarar in the Gadya trayam. In this verse Svami Desikan emphasizes that Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi are the ones that are responsible for the existence, inherent nature, and activities of the three kinds of sentient and insentient beings. The "niyAmikA" tribute from this verse highlights the fact that Daya Devi rules over the three kinds of sentient and insentient beings, when it comes to their existence, inherent nature, and activities. The tribute "pairaiparAhatA" denotes that Daya Devi is an unstoppable force. We may ask with respect to what? The answer lies in the next salutation of this verse "kR^ipaNa bharabhR^it ki~NkurvANa prabhUta guNAntarA" which denotes that She bears those who have akincanyam (utter helplessness and thus unable to redeem themselves). This is described as those who consider it a burden to bear the tag of utter helplessness. When one utters the salutation "akincanonyagati sharaNya tvatpAdamUlaM sharaNaM prapadye" (Being utterly helpless, I seek refuge in Your feet which is my sole recourse), they are instantly graced by Lord Narayana. The inner meaning is that when one performs sharaNAgati one needs to submit an appeal that they are utterly helpless, are absolutely incapable of protecting themselves, and have no other refuge except Lord Narayana. None else can afford protection (It is helpful to recall the sharaNAgati of Kakasura, who traversed the entire universe to free himself from the pursuit of Lord Rama's arrow to no avail as documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "pitA ca parityaktaH", and finally sought refuge at the feet of Lord Rama and Sita by way of prAyaschittam for his apacharam). Greatly moved by this appeal, Lord Narayana unfailingly comes to their help. In this context, the reference is to those who have adopted Daya Devi as their sole refuge. Thus, if one were to question what wealth these people possess, it is their akinchanyatvam. The tribute "kR^ipaNa bharabhR^it" from this Daya Satakam verse alludes to the fact that Daya Devi accepts their burden of being akinchanas.



Empress of the Universe

The tribute "prabhUta guNAntarA vahasi karuNe vaicakShaNyaM madIkShaNa sAhase" from this Daya Satakam verse describes the fact that the remaining kalyANa guNams of Lord Srinivasa are subservient to Daya Devi, who is so to speak the sankalpam of Lord Srinivasa. Because of Her stature as the unquestioned Empress of the Universe, She has unlimited freedom to do as She wills and thus quite daringly casts Her compassionate glances on me (It must be noted here that Svami Desikan in a mood of self-deprecation takes on the numerous faults inherent to common people even though he was endowed with blemishless conduct), which is not an easy task. It must be noted that gaining the kataksham of elevated personages is an onerous task. Furthermore, beholding certain kinds of people is forbidden. For example, when one wakes up from sleep in the morning, there are fairly stringent rules for what to behold and what not to behold. Beholding some things cause untold difficulties for the individual during the day. These are the amangala vastus (inauspicious objects). For example, brooms should never be placed by one's bedside since it is forbidden from viewing upon waking up from sleep. Beholding lamps, sumangalis, and fresh fruit is considered auspicious. If not, just viewing one's own hands upon waking up from

sleep is recommended. In Kerala it is customary to behold auspicious objects at the onset of the new year (ViShu KaNi). Therefore, objects such as ornaments, lamps, and fresh fruit are placed at one's bedside the night before so that one gets the new year off to an auspicious start, with the rationale that the entire year turns out to be auspicious. Here the act of Daya Devi beholding those who have sinned greatly is thus an act of great daring since it goes against the grains of the commonly recommended practice of not viewing anything inauspicious. A few visheShams need to be noted here. According to the salutation "trividha cidacitsattAsthema pravR^itti niyAmikA", Daya Devi is responsible for the existence, inherent nature, and activities of the three kinds of sentient and insentient beings. Not only that, Daya Devi functions as the sankalpam of Lord Srinivasa as described in the tribute "vR^iShagiri vibhoricChA". Thus, the glory of Daya Devi is impossible to describe by words (anirvacanIyam). In reality, Daya Devi is the cause for creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. These facts cannot be disputed by anyone. Daya Devi's sole aim is the well-being (yogakShemam - which has been elaborated upon in verse 32 of the Daya Satakam). In Sri GuNaratnakosham, Sri Parashara Bhattar declares "There exists a being who has sinned greatly. Upon beholding Sri Ranganayaki Thayar, he submitted a prayerful offering with folded hands in anjali mudra." This is captured in the tribute "kasmaicidanjalibharaM vahate vitIrya". The tribute "aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramaM padaM va" attests to the fact that Ranganayaki Thayar in response to this simple act on his part grants him all aishvaryam (material wealth), kaivalyam, as well as eternal residence in Parama Padam (mokSham). Having granted him all of this, Ranganayaki Thayar laments that She has not done enough for this great act on his part, carried out with considerable effort and wants to confer something more. This is captured in the salutation "koyamudAra bhAvaH". Here, Sri Parashara Bhattar admits that he is at a loss for words to describe the limitless compassion of Thayar. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, the jivan having performed sharaNAgati is captured through the tribute "kR^ipaNa bharabhR^it" and echoes the same sentiment as Sri Parashara Bhattar. This is further elaborated upon by Svami Desikan in the DevanAyaka PancAsat verse "niShkincanatva dhaninA vibhudheSha yena nyastaH svarakShaNabharastava pAda padme nanAvidha prathitayoga visheSha dhanyAH nArhanti tasya shatakoTi tamAMshakakShyAm" (I do not know what good I have done in what janma! However, I have a great wealth. This dhanam I submit to You my Lord. What is this dhanam? Inability to perform karma yogam, j~nAna yogam and bhakti yogam but seeking Your Feet as my sole refuge. I who possess this dhanam, have submitted the responsibility of my protection to Your Lotus Feet.

Those who behave in this manner, even great yogis who have accumulated tapobalam over countless births do not measure up to a small fraction.) Discerning this wealth of akincanatvam, Daya Devi, who is served by the other Kalyana gunams of Lord Srinivasa, casts Her compassionate glances on the sharaNAgata (In this case Svami Desikan has taken upon himself the role of a commoner, who has committed great sins and would thus be unfit for viewing according to the shastra pramANams documented earlier, but is graced by Daya Devi entirely on account of the performance of sharaNAgati). In the previous verse, the disposition of Daya Devi towards sharaNAgatas was documented.



May the Most Auspicious Mother cast Her Compassionate glances on us!

In this verse, Her upakAram to sharaNAgatas through Her compassionate glances is described. This decad (verses 71-80) is set to HariNi vR^ittam (meter). HariNI is another name for vR^iShabhaceshtita, which refers to a type of syllabic metre (vR^itta). HariNI contains seventeen syllables in each and every quarter and it possesses the gaNas namely na, sa, ma, ra, and sa. Since this decad is devoted to the glory of Daya Devi, HariNI is a most appropriate meter. In the eighth decad of

Tiruvaimozhi, Svami NammAzhvar presents an enjoyment of Bhagavad gunams (Bhagavad guna anubhavam). Specifically, this decad of the Tiruvaimozhi highlights the actions of Lord Narayana, in a manner that is discerning of His Bhakta's innermost desires and brings them great joy. In this verse of the Daya Satakam Svami Desikan highlights the fact that all other kalyana gunams of Lord Srinivasa are subservient to Daya Devi and await Her command. Since Daya Devi is the sole refuge of the SharaNAgatas, She instructs the other kalyana gunams of Lord Srinivasa to stand ready so that the Lord acts in a manner that ensures the well-being of the sharaNAgatas. For example, vAtsalyam is under the control of Daya Devi. How does She instruct vAtsalyam? This can be seen from the instance of a sharaNAgata, who has sinned greatly, arrives before Lord Srinivasa. Lord Srinivasa is in a dilemma as to how to rescue the sharaNAgata since the mountainous sin-pile offers no scope of redemption. At that instant, Daya Devi commands vAtsalyam to ensure that the Lord does not think much of the sins committed by the sharaNAgata and to open up the floodgates so that His overflowing affection for them takes over. In a like manner, each kalyana gunam of Lord Srinivasa acts as per the instruction of Daya Devi. Daya Devi of such stature deems it worthy of casting Her compassionate eye-glances on sinners like us (it must be remembered again here that the Shastras forbid viewing anything inauspicious as outlined earlier and that sinners fall in the worst category of those that can be viewed). Svami Desikan declares in this verse that indeed this is a daring act on the part of Daya Devi. Thus, contemplating on this mahopakAram of Daya Devi and submitting a prayer to Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi that they must rid us all of our sins and make us worthy of engaging in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, adiyen concludes the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You may be denoted by desire or will of Lord Srinivasa. This is indeed the divine will or Bhagavat Sankalpa. The Lord has a great burden of duties. He presides over the activity of three kinds of species (Nitya, Mukta, and Baddha). Karuna informs the Lord's three-fold activity of creation, sustenance, and annihilation. All the duties that He discharges are unquestionable, routine processes. None can deter Him from them. That He alone must fulfill this responsibility is well known. Nevertheless, He has a special corner for helpless indigent souls. Because this is His supreme task, all His qualities serve to assist Daya Devi. Daya Devi is the Empress of the Lord's auspicious qualities. Therefore, She is revered and loved by the other qualities. What is most striking now is: You tend to cast Your glances on me. This is a rather rash act of daring. You can do so since You



vR^iShagiri vibhoricChA

are unquestionable. However, I shudder to think of this (due to my mountainous sin-pile, which makes me totally unfit for viewing).”



Slokam 72

वृषगिरि पतेर्हृध्या विश्वावतार सहायिनी

क्षपित निखिलावद्या देवि क्षमादि निषेविता।

भुवन जननी पुंसां भोगापवर्ग विधायिनी

वितमसि पदे व्यक्तिं नित्यां बिभर्षि दये स्वयम्॥ ७२॥

vR^iShagiri pater hR^idhyA vishvAvatAra sahAyinI

kShapita nikhilAvadhyA devi kShamAdi niShevitA|

bhuvana jananI puMsAM bhogApavarga vidhAyinI

vitamasi pade vyaktiM nityAM bibharShi daye svayam||72



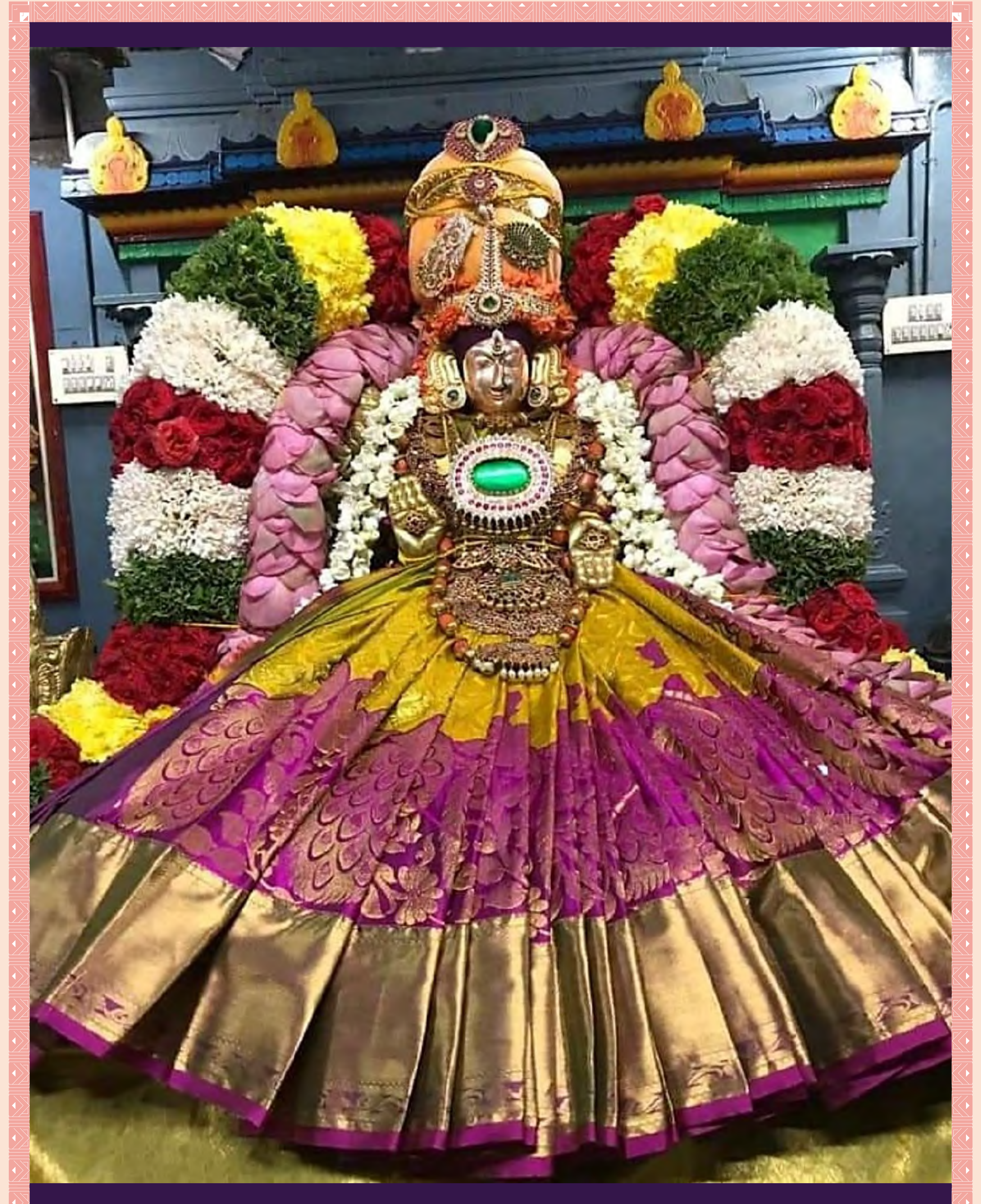
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We are examining the purport of the 8th decad of the Daya Satakam set to Harini meter. Harini denotes a female deer. The eyes of the female deer are quite enchanting. In particular, with wide open eyes the female deer casts its eye-glances on noble ones. In keeping with this fact, Svami Desikan describes in this decad the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi being cast on Saranagatas. Hence, the Harini meter becomes most appropriate for this set of ten verses. The plethora of ways in which Daya Devi renders Her mahopakaram for Saranagatas is documented. The previous verse documented the fact that Daya Devi is the sankalpam of Lord Srinivasa. Therein it was also highlighted that since Daya Devi functions as the sankalpam of Lord Srinivasa, which is responsible for the existence, inherent nature, and activities of the three kinds (baddha, mukta, and nitya) of sentient and insentient beings, She controls these activities too. In accordance with the Upanishad salutation "so kAmayata bahusyAm prajAyeyeti" the task of creation of the universe (srushti) comes about on account of the Lord's Sankalpam, which is again Daya Devi. The previous verse also documented the fact that when Lord Srinivasa decides to confer His Daya on someone, Daya Devi becomes an unstoppable force. Bhagavan's Vatsalyam towards Saranagatas is due to His sankalpam, which is Daya Devi. Hence, His vatsalyam becomes dayAdInam (subservient to Daya Devi). The torrential flow of Daya Devi is such that even if Mahalakshmi Thayar were to complain to Lord Srinivasa that the recipient of the

Daya is replete with faults, it will not be accepted by the Lord as documented by Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi tribute "yen aDiyAr atu ceyyAr ceitArEl nanRu ceitar" ("My Saranagatas will not act in that sinful manner. Even if they apparently did this only good will come out of it. Therefore, do not intervene to alter My sankalpam." Hence, the Lord never forsakes those who have surrendered to Him.)



This sentiment is also documented in the Srimad Ramayanam during Lord Rama's promise of protection to the Maharishis of daNDakaraNya through his solemn oath to exterminate the entire rakshasa clan that had been coming in the way of their tapas. Sita Devi enquires of the Lord "smArayetvam na shikShaye" (Oh Lord I am merely reminding You. I am not taking You to task in any manner because, whatever You resolve to do will only be correct and in full compliance with Dharma. These Rakshasas no doubt harass the Maharishis and frequently prevent them from carrying out their Tapas. However, as forest residents they have caused us no harm. Why then this hasty resolve to exterminate their entire clan?). To this Lord Rama responded "apyahaM jIvitaM jahyAM tvAM vA sIte sa lakShmaNAM na tu pratij~nAM saMshR^itya brAhmaNeShu visheShataH iti" (I may forsake You, that is dearer to Me than My own life. Let alone this, Lakshmana, who is even dearer, may also be forsaken in the same manner. However, I will uphold at any cost My promise to the Brahmanas, that have surrendered to Me with the request for help to stop the torment from the rakshasas.)



Oh Daya Devi of lofty stature!

This illustrates the fact that the Lord's sankalpam is an unstoppable force. The other kalyana gunams are subservient to Daya Devi eager to do Her bidding. Daya Devi of such lofty stature engages in an act of great daring, namely casting Her compassionate eye-glances on one who has sinned greatly and is therefore the lowliest of forms, that is absolutely unfit for viewing according to the Sastras. The state of this sinner is such that he is constantly engaged in forbidden acts (akR^itya karaNa), while readily giving up prescribed acts (kR^ityAnAm varjanam). Not only that he is steeped in apacharams (bhagavat bhAgavata and nAnAvida). These acts make him a prime candidate for Bhagavad nigraha sankalpam (punishment at the hands of Bhagavan). However, it is quite astonishing that Daya Devi selects this being for casting Her compassionate eye-glances. Does this enhance the greatness of Lord Srinivasa? This is the theme explored in this decad. This is in the manner of a son that has erred greatly and arrives home to discover that his father has discerned this act of sin and is extremely angered. As a result, he throws the child out of the house and declares that there shall be no food for the son for a couple of days. However, the son's mother exudes compassion and pacifies the boy with the words that the harsh tone of his father was only due to the anger arising from the son's sinful act and not any indication of the father's lack of affection for the son. She further advises her son to come back in a couple of hours when the father's anger has subsided, and he would be welcoming of the son. How does this come about? Does the father know about this or not? This is described in the "vaicakShaNyaM" tribute of the previous verse. In this context it may be noted that there are two categories of people - one that would intercede on behalf of the errant son while the angry father is on a rant in an attempt to becalm him or another group of people who would wait for the angry father to finish his outburst before making a case for the errant son on the grounds that the son is inherently good natured. Something beyond his control caused him to act in a sinful manner, for which he deserves to be excused. "He is after all our son. If he is punished thus, where will he go for a couple of days? He has no refuge besides us. Is this fair to him?" reasons the mother. This calls for extraordinary skill on the part of the mother. This is the act engaged in by Daya Devi by casting Her compassionate eye-glances on the errant son. This at once increases the greatness of Lord Srinivasa for rescuing an errant baddha jivan, while at the same time assuring the errant being, who would otherwise be a prime candidate for receiving punishment at the hands of the Lord, that he is in safe hands due to Her kataksham. This is an act of great daring, which is skillfully undertaken by Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that rather than intervening in the heat of the moment and thereby causing an increase in the

Lord's anger, which could easily result in Him declaring "You are supporting this egregious violator of My commands. You must be completely out of Your mind. You too leave My Presence along with him." Instead Daya Devi acts in a manner that enhances the Lord's glory while simultaneously redeeming the errant jivan. Thus, Daya Devi's act of transforming the Lord's nigraha sankalpam (punishment) towards those who have sinned greatly into one of anugraham (protection) greatly increases the Lord's glory. How is this possible? This is impossible for anyone. How then does Daya Devi accomplish this task? This is answered in this verse of the Daya Satakam "vR^iShagiri pater hR^idhyA vishvAvatAra sahAyinI kShapita nikhilAvadhyA devi kShamAdi niShevitA bhuvana jananI puMsAM bhogApavarga vidhAyinI vitamasi pade vyaktiM nityAM bibharShi daye svayam."



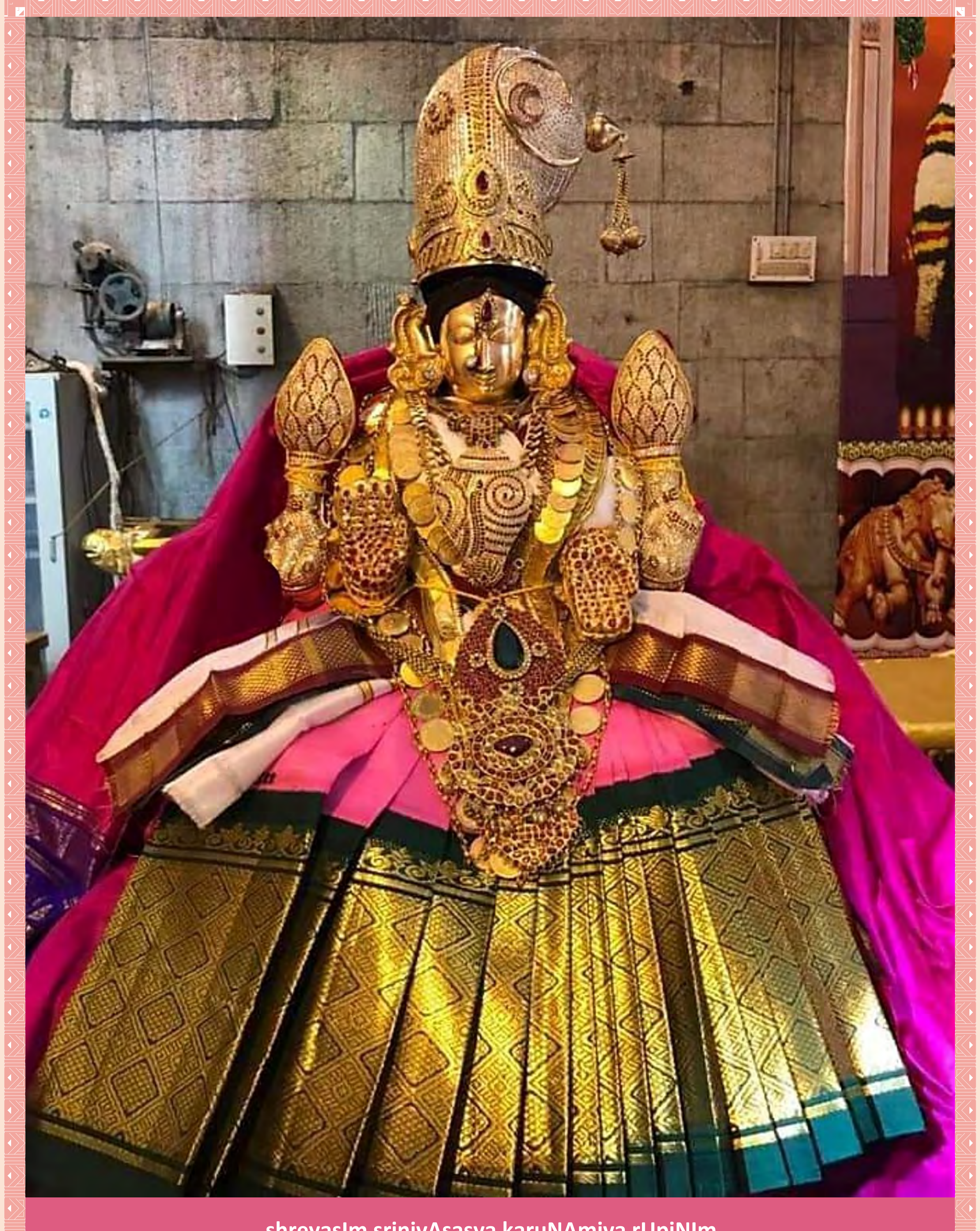
This verse outlines six reasons that establish the equivalence between Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar. The commentator for this verse, Sri. U.Ve. Tiruvahindrapuram Devanatachar Svamin (not to be confused with the Acharyas of yesteryears, Sri Tiruvahindrapuram Svami or Ayya Devanatachar Svamin), provides a unique anubhavam for this verse. After hearing 71 verses of glorification, Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! What is the use of submitting this tribute?" To this Svami Desikan responds "I see none else worthier of praise" for which Daya Devi enquires "I am a mere quality. I have to be necessarily associated with a person, in whom I seek refuge for this characteristic to be brought out.



Therefore, you would be better off glorifying the individual in whom I have sought refuge so that you can realize your goal and attain the desired benefit? What is the use of submitting your tribute to Me who is entirely dependent on someone else?”



Svami Desikan responds “When one is overcome by a state of extreme infatuation or excessive affection and experiences separation from the dearest object, it is common for the individual to pay obeisance to sentient as well as insentient beings without distinction. This is from the work of Kalidasa who states “kAmasAhi prakR^iti kR^ipaNA cetanAcetaneShu” reflecting the fact that one afflicted by a deep sense of infatuation is unable to make the distinction between sentient and insentient beings. How so? In the Megha Sandesham, a message is conveyed by a man for his beloved (from whom he is separated) through the clouds. Is it even possible for the cloud to understand this and deliver the message properly? Nevertheless, he instructs the cloud to deliver the message that he is residing in the Ramagiri Ashramam. Andal beholds the clouds and declares “What a great bhAgyam you have been bestowed with! You enjoy intimate contact with the hills of Tirumala which is the chosen place of residence for Lord Srinivasa. Please convey my message to Lord Srinivasa, that my mind is filled with grief on account of separation from Him but yet is engaged in constant contemplation of Him. In order to get rid of the heat arising from this separation, it is imperative for me to enjoy the cool contact with Him. Specifically, I wish to enjoy the same type of close contact with Lord Srinivasa that you enjoy. In fact, I am envious of this fact.” Is the cloud capable of delivering this message? Yet it is the anxiety of the poet that causes this outpouring in the spirit of the statement “gADavam mAdhaH praNaya padavI prApa vArtAnabhij~ne” (In such times of such a predicament one resorts to messaging via insentients.) For example, Svami Desikan employs a swan in the kAvyam HaMsa sandesham to convey the message of Lord Rama to Sita in His moment of grief arising from separation from Her. It is immaterial to Svami Desikan whether or not the swan is able to deliver this message properly. This is merely intended to be a mechanism for transmitting the message of grief of the emperor being separated from the empress. Using this background, Svami Desikan answers Daya Devi’s question with the statement “It is immaterial to us whether You bless us or whether Lord Srinivasa in whom You have sought refuge graces us. My overwhelming bhakti for You causes me to engage in this outpouring in Your praise. Hence this glorification is dedicated to You.” Daya Devi responds “I am merely a guNam. In fact as per your guNeShu sArvabhaumi tribute earlier, there is no doubt that I am the empress of Lord Srinivasa’s auspicious qualities. However, there is the well-established practice in the world that only one in whom I have sought refuge ought to be glorified. Why don’t you submit your praise to Him?” The answer to this question is provided in the present Daya Satakam verse.



shreyasIm srinivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm

Svami Desikan first notes that Daya Devi is no different from Mahalakshmi Thayar as per the earlier tribute of "shreyasIm srinivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm". That is if a concrete form were to be assigned to the Daya guNam it would absolutely have to be Mahalakshmi Thayar. Thus, there is no distinction between Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar. Hence, a tribute to Daya Devi is a tribute to Mahalakshmi Thayar, which would be elevating for Lord Srinivasa. This is what has been undertaken in the present instance. The acts arising from one's body causes joy or sorrow for one's Atma. For example, if one adorns one's body with sandalwood paste, does it give joy to the body or to the Atma? It is indeed for the latter. Likewise, Mahalakshmi Thayar, and Daya Devi are inseparable. Thus, if Daya Devi is the sariram, Mahalakshmi Thayar is the Atma. In this instance the relationship is reversible too. Thus, any upakarams rendered to the sariram bring great joy to the Atma. Hence, Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar are not distinct from each other. Therefore, a glorification of one of them automatically becomes a glorification of the other. Svami Desikan provides six reasons for this oneness. The sambodhanam in this verse is "Oh Devi Kshama!" Again the sambodhanam at the conclusion of this verse "vitamasi pade vyaktiM nityAM bibharShi daye svayam" is noteworthy.

This refers to the fact that Daya Devi is both Piratti (Mahalakshmi Thayar) as well as Daya guNam. The first reason for this is captured in the tribute "vR^iShagiri pater hR^idhyA" coming about due to Thayar's residence in the vakShasthalam (chest/heart) of Lord Srinivasa. Svami NammAzhvar echoes this sentiment best in his famous SaraNagati Pasuram of the Tiruvaimozhi "akala illEn iRayum enRu alarmElmangai uraimArba" to denote the fact that Mahalakshmi is not even for a moment separated from Lord Srinivasa. SVami Desikan too attests to this fact in the Bhagavad dhyAna sopanam salutation "shrIvatsena prathitavibhavaM shrIpadanyAsadhanyaM madhyaM bAhvormaNivararuchA ranjitaM rangadhamnaH" (Beholding the chest of Lord Rangantha, one encounters the Srivatsa mole. This is a source of great joy. The chest region becomes sanctified due to the touch of Thayar's feet. Svami Desikan declares that this region becomes dhanyam (thankful or gratified) due to the contact with Thayar's feet.) This is further reflected in Svami Desikan's DevanAyaka PancAshat tribute "shrIvatsa kaustubharamA vanamAlikA~NkaM cintAnubhUyalabhate caritArthatAM naH" (The chest area of Lord Devanayaka is adorned by the Srivatsa mark, the kaustubha gem, Mahalakshmi, and the vanamAla garland, which greatly enhances His beauty. Saluting this region of the Lord gives rise to a sense of fulfillment of one's birth.) The point to be observed here is that Svami Desikan is offering a mangalasasanam

to Daya Devi in this verse. Daya Devi is never separated from Mahalakshmi, who is never separated from Lord Srinivasa. Thus, Daya Devi is never separated from Lord Srinivasa. Another salient point in this context is that Daya represents an auspicious attribute. For example, one may be hailed for one's valor. However, the place where precisely this is found in the person cannot be pin-pointed. It can only be exhibited by his display of fearlessness. However, with respect to DayA guNam its place of existence in Lord Srinivasa can be uniquely identified. This is the heart of Lord Srinivasa. This in fact is the reason for Lord Srinivasa to be called dayALu (kind-hearted one due to Daya Devi taking up residence there).



Thus, a reason for the equivalence between Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar comes about due to their common place of residence in Lord Srinivasa's heart from this Daya Satakam verse tribute. This raises a question that the Lord's chest/heart region is adorned by the Srivatsa mark, the kaustubha gem, Thayar, as well as the vanamAla garland. Since Daya Devi exists in the same place as Thayar along with them, how then can the uniqueness of Daya in terms of Mahalakshmi Thayar be concluded? Could Daya denote the other items adorning the Lord's chest region. This is answered in the tribute "vishvAvatAra sahAyinI" of this Daya Satakam verse. The Purusha SUktam salutation "ajAyamAno bahudhA vijAyate" refers to the fact that the Lord who is not required to take any birth takes many births. This is meant entirely for redeeming common people like us, who have sinned greatly and are subjected to a seemingly

interminable cycle of births and deaths. Therefore, Lord Narayana undertakes numerous avatarams for this purpose. This is reflected in the Rg Vedam tribute 3.8.4 "saushreyAn bhavati jAyamAnaH" It has been stated here that due to karma, commoners like us are subject to numerous births. Each birth is determined in accordance with one's prevailing karma for that birth. However, when it comes to the Lord's Avatarams, these are entirely governed by His sankalpam. In each of our births we endure numerous travails on account of our karma. However, in each avataram of the Lord His glory only increases. This is on account of the fundamental difference in the cause for His Avataram (sankalpa pUrvakam) and our birth (karma anuguNam). The increase in the Lord's glory comes about due to the fact that in each of His avatarams, He is engaged in the task of protecting His seekers (errant baddha jivans, who have no other recourse for redemption). The list of those redeemed only increases in each of the Lord's avatarams. In order to accomplish



the purpose of each of His numerous avatarams, He is accompanied by Daya Devi. This is the import of the "vishvAvatAra sahAyinI" tribute.



vishvAvatAra sahAyinI

The tribute "rAghavatve bhavatsIta rukmiNi kR^iShNa janmani anyeshu cAvatareShu viShNornityAnapAyini" from the ViShnu PurANam highlights the fact

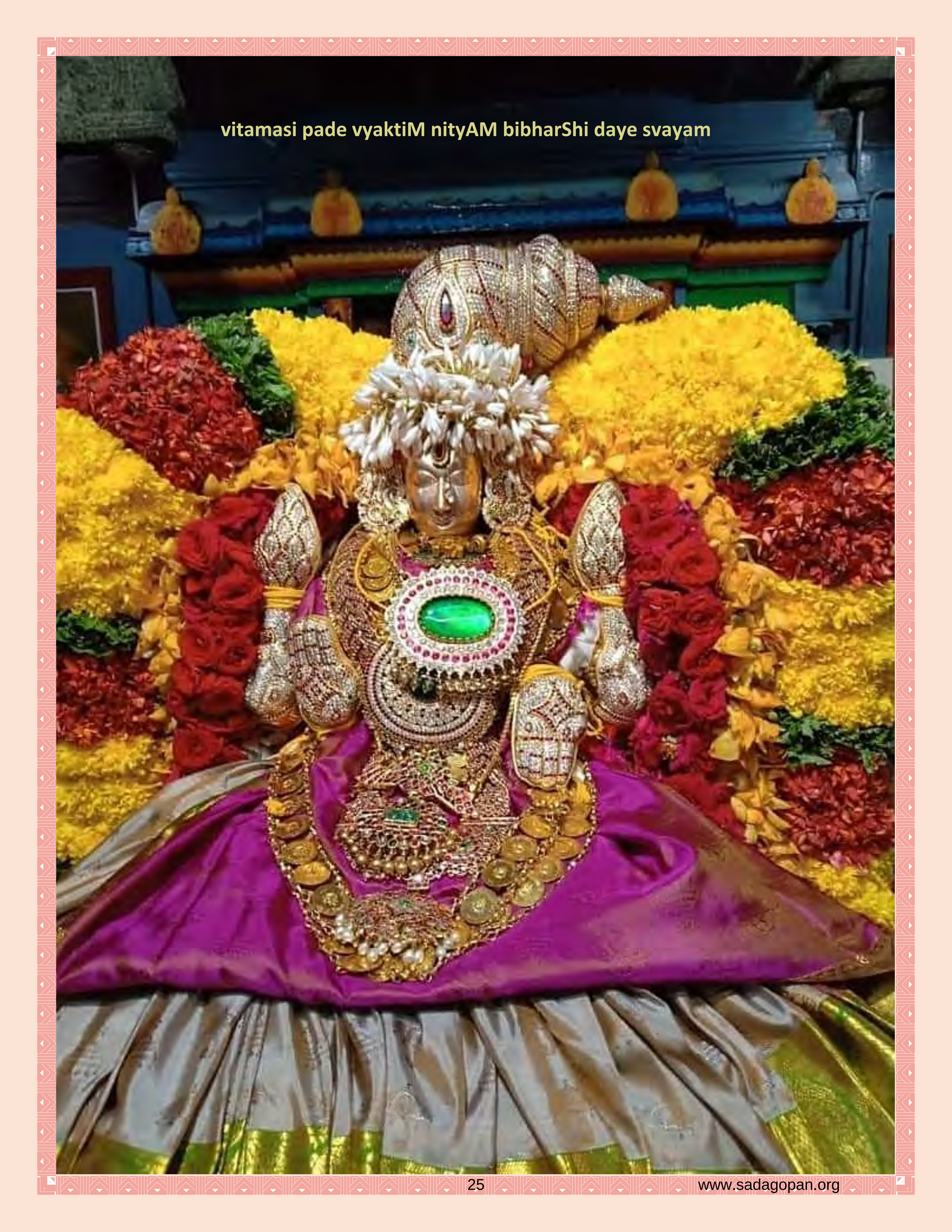
that in each of the Lord’s avatarams, He is accompanied by Mahalakshmi. If the Lord incarnated as Rama, He was accompanied by Mahalakshmi in the form of Sita. In the incarnation of Krishna, He was accompanied by Mahalakshmi as Rukmini. In a like manner, in all of His incarnations,H was never for a moment separated from Thayar. In keeping with this scriptural authority, Svami Desikan documents



Mahalakshmi Thayar's inseparability from Srinivasa in all His incarnations through the "vishvAvatAra sahAyinI" salutation of this Daya Satakam verse. She ensures that the Lord successfully accomplishes the purpose for each of His incarnations. The Ramayanam tribute "tulya shIla vayorvR^iddhAm" (There cannot be an appropriate description for the age, beauty, or glory of Lord Narayana. However, in this respect He is matched by a similar incarnation of Thayar, who is His constant companion.)

One may ask that Lord Narayana took the form of a Brahmachari during the Trivikrama avatAram. Where was Thayar present with Him during this time? Did He not incarnate alone? This is answered through the tribute "kR^iShNAjInena samvR^iNNvan" reflecting the fact that Mahalakshmi is always present in the Lord's VakShasthalam. The Trivikrama avataram was no exception and hence he was not separated from Mahalakshmi even though He took the form of a Brahmachari. During this incarnation, Lord Narayana was apprehensive of being identified through this eternal association with Mahalakshmi Thayar due to Her residence in His heart by Mahabali and thus being disqualified as a Brahmachari, which would make Him ineligible for receiving the gift of charity from Mahabali. In this context, the Lord is reluctant to ask Thayar to take residence elsewhere since His avatara kAryam (purpose of His incarnation) cannot be accomplished without Her support. Therefore, He masks Her presence in His chest area using the kR^iShNAajInam (deer-skin) covering, which is commonly used by all Brahmacharis. Thus, it is established that Mahalaksmi Thayar accompanies the Lord in each of His incarnations. Since She is no different from Daya Devi, it follows that Daya Devi accompanies the Lord during each of His incarnations as evidenced in the "vishvAvatAra sahAyinI" glorification. Svami Desikan employs the usage "karuNA kAkutsthaH" to describe the fact that the defining trait of the Rama avataram was KaruNa. Likewise, in each avatAram of the Lord, the purpose of the incarnation was realized only on account of KaruNa - Daya Devi. In the Rama AvatAram, the Lord time and again demonstrated that He is the Saranagata rakShakan (one who upholds His sworn position to protect those who have surrendered to Him). kR^ipai is critical to ensure this. For example, Kakasura was protected on account of his SaraNagati to Lord Rama. According to the RamayaNam salutation "kR^ipayA paryapAlayet", it was entirely on account of Daya Devi, that the protection of Kakasura came about. In the KR^iShNa avatAram, His abundant compassion is frequently on display. For example, Draupadi uttered the praise of Lord Krishna through the salutation "hA kR^iShNa dvAraka vAsa". In response, Lord Krishna laments through the statement "ruNam pravruddhameva manye" that He is

forever in debt to Draupadi for not being able to do enough in response to Her appeal. More precisely, Lord KR^iShNa states that He has only fulfilled the cry of anguish pertaining to one of the names uttered by Draupadi. His debt to Her for submitting the appeal through other names still remains and that it is increasing in the manner of interest accrued on debt. This is entirely due to Mahalakshmi Thayar, who accompanied Lord in His avataram of KR^iShNa. Since She is no different from Daya Devi, it is again Daya Devi that is responsible for bringing to fruition, the purpose of the Lord's avatAram. One may enquire that the Lord incarnated as ParashurAma and will incarnate as Kalki. In these avatarams, Lord Narayana is a ruthless annihilator. What is the role of Daya Devi in these manifestations? Here too there is a role for Daya Devi, which will be discussed in the next decad of the Daya Satakam. Even the seemingly ruthless act of destroying evil forces in these incarnations is in fact a blessing (anugraham) for them. This is brought about by Daya Devi. When Bharata visited the Ashramam of BharadvAja in his quest to bring back Lord Rama from the forest, the sage advised Bharata not to regret the actions of Kaikeyi in banishing Lord Rama to the forest. Instead, he noted that she has performed a great service, which benefits the entire universe. How so? By banishing Lord Rama to the forest, she has paved the way for the destruction of the rakshasa clan that has been harassing sages residing in the forest and engaged in austerities. If Lord Rama had not come to the forest, there would be no opportunity for Him to encounter the Rakshasas. They are not going to come out seeking battle with Him. Instead, they would merrily go about their task of disrupting the penance of sages, who would be rendered helpless and forced to endure the torture. Thus, it is entirely due to Kaikeyi's doing that great fame will come about. This again is an act of Daya Devi. Thus, the avatAra kAryam (purpose of the avatAram) is realized due to an act of Daya Devi. This is again an equivalence between Mahalakshmi Thayar and Daya Devi, a second reason outlined in the tribute "vishvAvatAra sahAyinI" of this Daya Satakam verse. Another reason comes about from the salutation "kShapita nikhilAvadhyA devi". The anvaya kramam (prose order) for this tribute is "nikhilAvadhyA kShapita devi". The meaning of this tribute is that aniShTa nivR^itti (removal of undesired happenings or acquisitions) and iShTa prApti (realization of desires that bring auspiciousness). The first one "aniShTa nivR^itti" is an essential step to the realization of "iShTa prApti", which follows as a natural consequence. For example, one may desire to acquire great wealth. If this is realized but comes with the baggage of constant ailment, which drains all the wealth, the accrual of great wealth becomes pointless in that he is unable to enjoy this. Thus, the ailment becomes aniShTam in this instance. Only when this is


vitamasi pade vyaktiM nityAM bibharShi daye svayam

removed is the individual able to enjoy the wealth. Thus, it is imperative for aniShTa nivR^itti in order to realize iShTa prApti. Mahalakshmi Thayar/Daya Devi ensure that aniShTa nivR^itti first takes place before iShTa prApti is naturally realized. This is documented in the tribute “nikhilAvadhyA kShapita” of this verse, which alludes to the removal of all obstacles that come in the way of realizing one’s desires. This is ensured by Mahalakshmi Thayar/Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi destroys our sins and renders us fit for acceptance by Lord Srinivasa. This is another cause for the equivalence between Mahalakshmi Thayar and Daya Devi. Svami Alavandar declares in the Chatushloki “shreyonahyaravindalocana manaH kAntA prasAdAdhR^ite samsR^ityakShara vaiShNavAtdvasu nR^iNAm sambhAvyate karhicit” (The benefits of Bhogam, Kaivalyam, and Moksham will not accrue to Sri Vaishnavas, without the grace of Thayar, who is the beloved of Aravinda lochanan-Lord Narayana.) Thus, it is established that once Thayar’s kataksham is cast on an individual, all manner of elevated benefits follow. In order for this to come about, all obstacles coming in the way of realizing these benefits need to be destroyed. This is brought about by the grace of Mahalakshmi Thayar. In a like manner, Daya Devi too ensures the destruction of one’s sins that come in the way of realizing lasting and bountiful fruits. In this context, the greatest benefit is that of moksham resulting in eternal service for the Divya Dampatis in Sri Vaikuntam. The bond of karma arising from one’s sins and good acts are the impediments coming in the way of one’s moksham. These are completely destroyed by Daya Devi/Mahalakshmi Thayar. Hence, the equivalence. Next comes the tribute “kShamAdi niShevitA” from this Daya Satakam verse. “KShama” denotes forgiveness epitomized by Bhumi Devi. The usage “Adi” refers to NIlA Devi. They serve as assistants to Mahalakshmi Thayar in the task of protecting Saranagatas. They in fact function as sharIrams of Mahalakshmi Thayar. However, they do not exhibit any envy or jealousy toward Thayar. This is due to the fact that they exist as the sharIram of Thayar. For example, our body is endowed with limbs and other sense organs. However, these are never in competition with one another. If the eyes cover themselves with dark glasses to seek relief from the heat, the foot does not complain that the eyes are soothing themselves. However, the feet have to contend with the heat. Thus, relief for any part of the body counts as relief for the entire body. In a like manner, the ubhaya nAcchiyArs, BhUmidevi and NIla Devi function as the limbs of Mahalakshmi Thayar so to speak and hence are eager to render service to Her. This is the import of the salutation “kShamAdi niShevitA”. In the case of Daya Devi, we observe that She too is kShamAdi niShevitA due to the fact that She is the empress of all kalyana gunams of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, qualities

such as forbearance automatically become subservient to Daya Devi and are eager to do Her bidding. Kakasura's offence towards Sita Devi was forgiven entirely on account of KaruNa. Specifically, Lord Rama's anger in that instance was controlled by the Daya guNam. The Lord acquires the title "daNDa dhAratvam" on account of the fact that He metes out punishment to those who have sinned. However, this too is controlled by the command of Daya Devi. Samudra raja incurred apachAram towards Lord Rama. However, protecting those who surrender to him is the Lord's sworn position. This is documented in the Vedam tribute "baddhyam prapannam na prati prayacChati", which means that even if one's crime is such that he deserves death by hanging at the gallows, the moment he performs SaraNagati, he must be protected at any cost. In keeping with this dictum even though Samudra raja incurred apacharam towards Lord Rama and deserved to be punished, on account of his SaraNagati to Lord Rama, he was spared of the punishment. Instead, his adversaries were punished with death. The reason for this transformation was entirely Daya Devi. Thus, it is established that Daya Devi transforms all the heat generating characteristics of Lord Srinivasa into that which is cool and soothing. This needs to be understood in the context that Daya Devi transforms the nigraha sankalpam (punishment) of Lord Srinivasa into one of anugraham (blessing) for those who perform SaraNagati. Svami Desikan illustrates another important concept in the Paduka Sahasram. Kshama (forbearance) is at the command of Daya Devi. Lord Narayana took the incarnation as Rama. It may be observed in general that the purpose of the incarnation was to destroy Ravana. However, in the context of Daya Devi, it was meant to erect the bridge across the ocean, which will be discussed in the next decad. Here, it must be noted that had KShama been present and operated at the command of Daya Devi, Lord Rama would not be able to accomplish the purpose of killing Ravana and would have instead found a way to reform him so that he could be forgiven. Therefore, Paduka Devi, who symbolizes KShama, was sent back to rule over Ayodhya, while Lord Rama remained in the forest. This is documented in the Paduka Sahasram tribute "pAdAvani prabhutarAn aparAdhavargAn sODuM kShama tvamasi mUrtimatIkShamaiva tatvAM vihAya nihatAH paripanthinaste devena dAsharathinA dasha kaNThamukhyAH" . In the Daya Satakam, Svami Desikan highlights the equivalence between Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar. In the Paduka Sahasram, Svami Desikan outlines the equivalence between Paduka Devi and Kshama (Bhumidevi). The import of this tribute is that even when one who is an emperor of sins (one who has sinned greatly), the Padukas are capable of tolerating these sins and grace the individual. Thus, if the the Padukas were present by the Lord's side, they would have brought

about a reconciliation on some grounds and ensured the forgiveness of Ravana. Hence, the purpose of the avataram would remain unfulfilled. Therefore, Lord Rama graced Bharata with the Padukas as a result of his SaraNagati seeking the return of Lord Rama, to rule over Ayodhya. This enabled Lord Rama to accomplish the purpose of the incarnation. Thus, the tribute "kShamAdi niShevitA" provides the fourth reason for the equivalence between Daya Devi and Mahalakshmi Thayar. Next the "bhuvana jananI" salutation from this Daya Satakam verse is examined. "bhuvana jananI" denotes that Thayar is cause for creation for all beings of the universe. She is the mother of the entire universe. She exudes overbearing motherly affection for every being in the universe. Therefore, the title "bhuvana janani" becomes befitting.

The ViShNu puraNam salutation "tvaM mAtA sarvalokanAm deva devo hariH pitA tvayai viShNunAcAmba jagatvyAptaM carAcaram" becomes relevant in this context. The import of this salutation is that Lord Narayana is the father of the entire universe, while Mahalakshmi is the mother. The creation of all beings comes about on account of Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi as a routine. With respect to Daya Devi, She too is the cause for creation of the entire universe as documented earlier in verse 17 through the salutation "acidavishiShTAn praLaye jantUn avalokya jAta nirvedA karaNakaLebarayogam vitarasi vR^iShashailanAtha karuNe tvam" (Moved by the existence of all beings existing in an inert state during the time of praLayam, Daya Devi pleads with the Lord to engage in the task of creation so that these beings can be assigned life forms and endowed with senses to experience joys and sorrows with the intent that these beings put their bodies to good use for Bhagavad kaimkaryam through the adoption of either bhakti yogam or Prapatti. Thus, Daya Devi too begets the title "bhuvana janani". Sri Kuresha salutes this aspect of Thayar in the shrI sthavam through the eulogy "yasyA vIkShya mukhaM tadi~NgitaparAdhIno viddhattekhilaM krIDeyaM khalu nAnyathAsya rasadA syAdaikarasyAttayA". This establishes the fact that both Lord Narayana and Thayar have an equal part to play in the process of creation of the universe. In the guNaratna kosham salutation Sri Parashara Bhattar declares "shriyai samastacidacidvidhAnavyasanaM hareH a~NgIkAribhirAlokaiH sArthayantyai kR^itonjaliH" (Lord Narayana engages in the task of creation with a great deal of effort. Srushti is carried out in accordance with one's karma. This gets complicated when it comes to even a single sentient being. What should be the ordering of the karma. How much of the effect of the puNyas and pApas does the individual have to endure? In what sequence and what time? Should the individual be afforded a chance at redemption? All of these issues pose considerable challenges when it



tvam vitamasi pade svayam nityAM vyaktiM bibharShi

comes to the creation of a single sentient being. What then would be the complexity that comes about in the process of creating the entire universe with millions and millions of sentient and insentient beings, their numerous pre-determined interactions on the basis of karma? This is indeed a gargantuan task carried out by Lord Narayana and hence the descriptor "with a great deal of effort". Once this is determined, He looks at Mahalakshmi Thayar for Her approval. Only upon gaining Her approval does the Lord complete His task of creation. Sri Parashara Bhattar states that only to gain the approving eye-glances of Thayar does Lord Narayana undertake the task of creation of the universe with a great deal of effort.) This completes the exposition on the fifth reason for the equivalence between Mahalakshmi Thayar and Daya Devi.

Finally, the last reason for the equivalence is outlined in the salutation "pumsAm BhOgapavarga viDhAyini" of this Daya Satakam verse. Conferring the blessings of Bhogam (aishvaryam, material wealth) as well as apavargam (moksham) is the task of Mahalakshmi Thayar. Likewise, Daya Devi too confers all material benefits to her seekers. Not only that she ensures that those seeking moksham unfailingly are granted this benefit. This is the implication of the tribute "puMsAM bhogApavarga vidhAyinI. The manner in which this is granted is quite instructive. For instance if one by sheer happenstance begets the opportunity to have a darsanam of Sri Ranganayaki Thayar at Srirangam and submits a prayerful offering with folded hands in anjali mudra, Thayar immediately grants his desires be they aishvaryam (wealth in the material sense), akSharagatim (Kaivalyam), or Parama Padam (Moksham) in accordance with the Gunaratnakosham tribute "aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramaM padaM vA kasmaicidAnjali bharaM vahatevitIrya." Furthermore, having granted this Sri Ranganayaki Thayar laments that She has not done enough in response to this act on the part of the individual carried out with great effort. This is captured in the Gunaratnakosham tribute "asmainakinciducitaM kR^itamityathAmba". Sri Parashara Bhattar concludes the Gunaratnakosham verse with the salutation "koyamudAra bhAvaH" (I am at loss for words to describe Your compassion). This precise sentiment is captured by Svami Desikan in the "puMsAM bhogApavarga vidhAyinI" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, just as Mahalakshmi Thayar is capable of conferring Bhogam, apavargam, and moksham to Her seekers, Daya Devi too grants these benefits to Her seekers is the import of this tribute. Typically a large gathering of Bhaktas arrives each day at the Venkatam hill to offer prostrations for Lord Srinivasa. Not all of them desire moksham. Daya Devi grants them all of their desires and in time causes them to seek moksham, which also She grants. This completes the

exposition on the six reasons for the equivalence between Mahalakshmi Thayar and Daya Devi and establishes the equivalence beyond any doubt. Therefore, Svami Desikan answers Daya Devi through the statement "Oh Mother! Rest assured that I am not merely glorifying a mere guNam. Instead, I am glorifying that guNam, which when assigned concrete form is Mahalakshmi Thayar!" Daya Devi of such glorious attributes performs an important task as documented in the salutation "tvam vitamasi pade svayam nityAM vyaktiM bibharShi" of this Daya Satakam verse. Namely, Sri Vaikuntam, which is beyond the reach of tamas (tamo guNam) and is replete with Shuddha satvam, acquires a radiance that is sustained by Mahalakshmi Thayar/Daya Devi. In Sri Vaikuntam, Thayar is always seen in the form of Mahalakshmi. In the Rama avataram, She takes the incarnation of Sita to match the attributes of Lord Rama, while in the Krishna avataram, She incarnates as Rukmini to ensure a corresponding match. Likewise, Daya Devi too reveals Her pristine form in Sri Vaikuntam, while morphing in accordance with the needs of each avataram of the Lord. In all other places, Daya Devi reveals Herself in accordance with the demands of the situation in keeping with the Bhakti of those who seek the Lord, and in proportion to their mahavishvasam in the Lord while performing sharaNagati. This establishes the fact that Daya Devi is no different from Mahalakshmi Thayar and thus glorification of Daya Devi is in fact a glorification of Mahalakshmi Thayar. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi performs all the functions of Mahalakshmi Thayar. Here the commentator for this work, Sri. U.Ve. Tiruvahindrapuram Devanathachar Svamin (not to be confused with the Acharyas, Tiruvahindrapuram Swami or Ayya Devanathachar Swami), observes that due to the tribute "vitamasi pade vyaktiM nityAM bibharShi daye svayam" Daya Devi is the nirhetuka kR^ipa (the mercy that is inherent and needs no cause to come forth to rescue Her seekers). If one enquires, where this exists, the answer from this tribute is unmistakably Sri Vaikuntam - the place which is beyond the reach of tamas. However, in prakrutimaNDalam (all worlds below Sri Vaikuntam), the Daya of Lord Srinivasa flows as "sAhetuka" (namely requiring a cause to emanate). The inner meaning is that one's prayer, or the contact with Bhagavatas and their prayers becomes the cause for invoking Lord Srinivasa's Daya. As a consequence, one becomes privy to the grace of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, it is incorrect to declare the Lord's Daya as "nirhetuka" (causeless). In the prakR^iti maNDalam, it is very much "sahetuka" (requiring cause due to one's effort). There is no doubt that it is only the Lord's Daya that protects all beings. However, only some seem to be privy to this while others are not. This is accounted for by the "sahetuka" nature of Daya in prakR^iti maNDalam. In summary, it is concluded that Daya Devi is no different

from Mahalakshmi Thayar and that glorification of Daya Devi is not a tribute to a mere guNam. Instead, it is a salutation for Mahalakshmi Thayar. Since both of them are associated with Lord Srinivasa, due to Their residence in the heart of Lord Srinivasa, due to accompanying Him in each of His avatarams, due to removal of all obstacles in the path of His seekers, due to Their role in the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe, serving as the mother of the universe, granting the wishes of the seekers be it aishvaryam, kaivalyam, or moksham, and revealing Themselves in Their pristine form in Sri Vaikuntam, which is beyond the reach of tamas, gaining Her kataksham requires an effort of Bhakthi on our part. She stands ready to gush forth in response to this act of Bhakti. Thus, in order to gain the kataksham of Lord Srinivasa an effort on our part is called for. Recognizing our inability to adopt the nuances of Bhakti yogam, if one submits an appeal of utter helplessness to Daya Devi and requests Her grace in the manner of Svami NammAzhvar's "aDikeezh amarntu pukuntene", one is guaranteed of Her grace. With this prayerful thought, we conclude the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharíar Svamin:

"Throughout this stotram, Svami Desikan addresses Daya. The appendage Devi is added, to give Her a concrete shape and a reality. This verse has the purport of asserting that Goddess Mahalakshmi has all the attributes of Daya Devi. This identification is brought about by Svami Desikan using slEDai, the poetic skill of words with double meaning.

You are close to the heart of the Lord; You accompany the Lord in all His avatarams; You are the force that removes all evils and misfortunes of the devotees; You enjoy the assistance of Bhumi Devi (who epitomizes forgiveness). You are the mother of all creations. You confer pleasure, affluence, as well as the eternal anandam of moksham. You take Your own form as Mahalakshmi in Sri Vaikuntam - eternal, concrete, material form, so to say, You do this of Your own accord.

A few additional observations are in order: Our Philosophy is strictly monotheistic. Many brethren of ours term this as pantheism, because of popular, ignorant notions. Lord Narayana is ONE GOD. If we attribute three consorts, Lakshmi, Bhumi Devi, and Nila Devi to Him, it is strictly in conformance with Vedic authority. The other Devis are alluded to only for convenience of reference. They are qualities personified. Indeed, Mahalakshmi partakes of the Daya quality. The poetic genius of Swami Desikan weaves in our imagination, the concept of Daya as a consort. This has been introduced in verse 6 of this storam and is reiterated here."

Slokam 73

स्वयमुदयिनः सिद्धाद्याविष्कृताश्च शुभालयाः

विविध विभव व्यूहावासाः परं च पदं विभोः।

वृषगिरि मुखेष्वेतेष्विच्छावधि प्रतिलब्धये

दृढ विनिहिता निश्रेणिस्त्वं दये निज पर्वभिः॥ ७३॥

svayamudayinaH sidhdAdhyA viShkR^itAscha shubhAlayAH

vividha vibhava vyUhAvAsAH paraM ca padaM vibhoH|

vR^iShagiri mukheShveteShvicChAvadhi pratilabdhaye

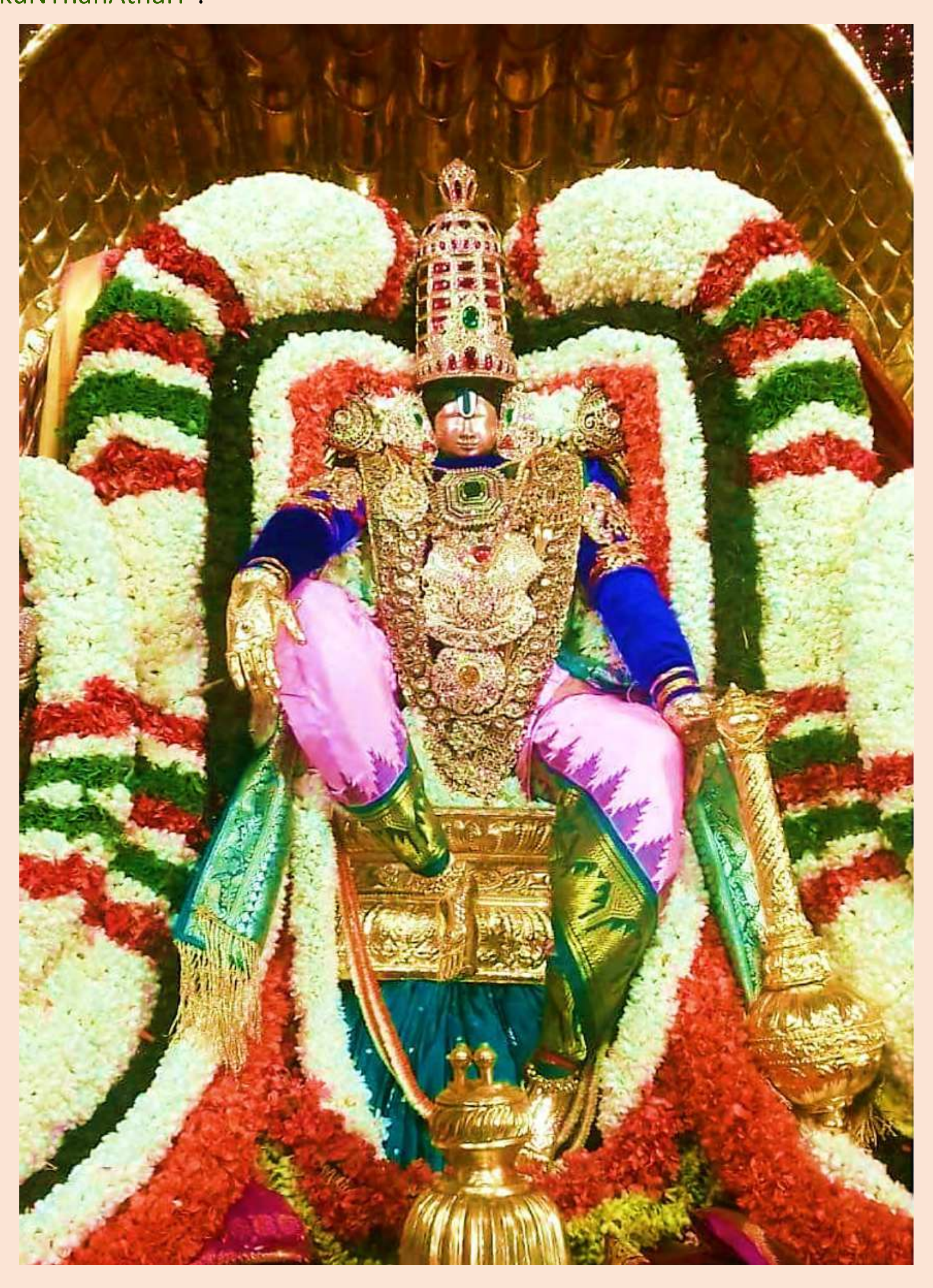
dR^iDha vinihitA nishreNistvaM daye nija parvabhiH||73



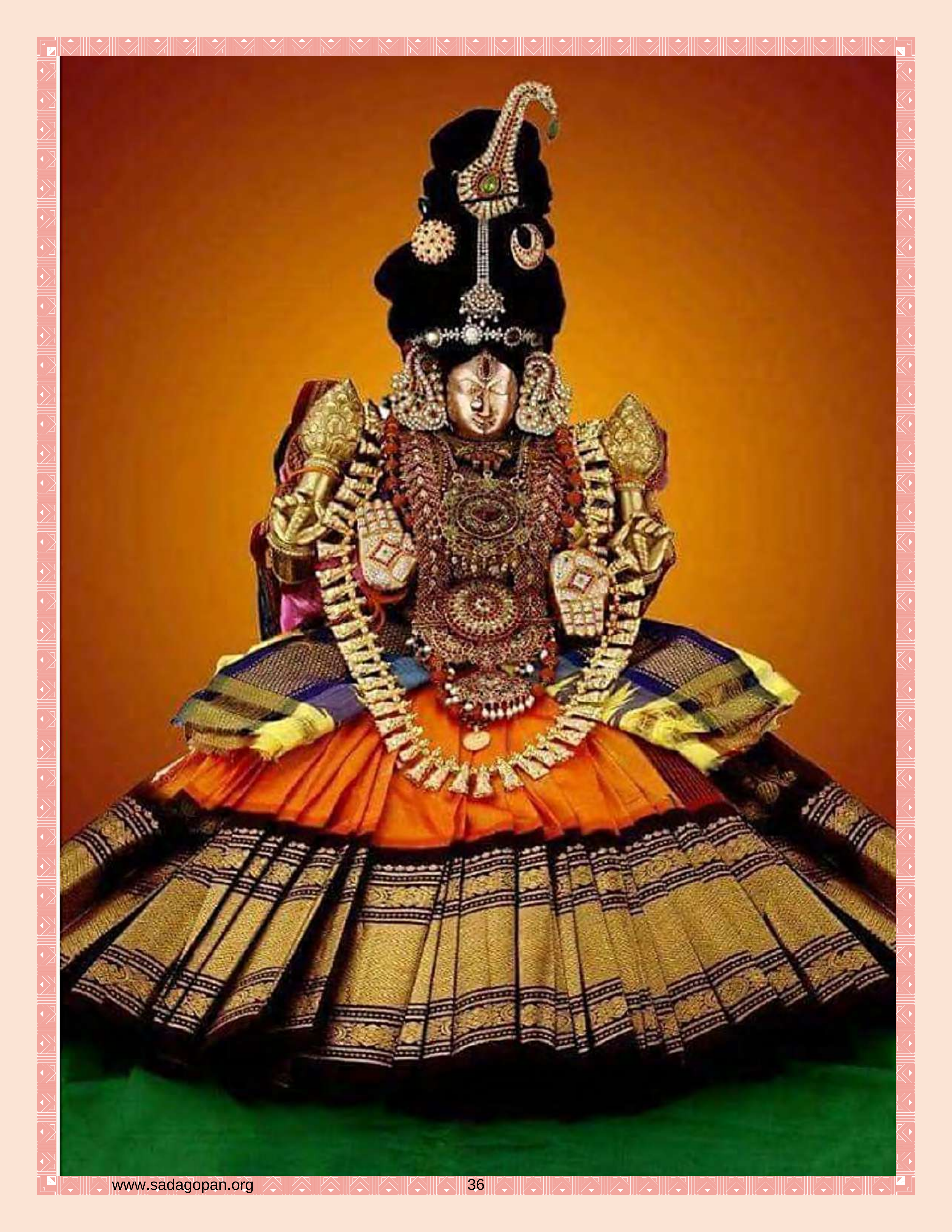
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We are enjoying the eighth decad of Svami Desikan's Daya Satakam, wherein he documents the numerous anugrahams and upakarams undertaken by Daya Devi for our benefit. The previous verse outlined six reasons for the equivalence between Daya Devi and anugrahamayIm (in whose dictionary, the term punishment does not exist), Mahalakshmi Thayar. In this verse, Svami Desikan visualizes Daya Devi as a ladder, that enables one to climb up. Just as we use a ladder to access hard to reach desirable objects, Daya Devi enables us to attain all elevated benefits. Due to karma all of us suffer from bondage to samsara and are thus experiencing great travails. This is in the manner of "punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam" reflecting an interminable cycle of births and deaths. For struggling beings like us, Daya Devi paves the way to attain moksham, which guarantees residence in Sri Vaikuntam, while engaging in the constantly blissful activity of Kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple. This is the purport of this Daya Satakam verse. This verse is "svayamudayinaH sidhdAdhyA viShkR^itAscha shubhAlayAH vividha vibhava vyUhAvAsAH paraM ca padaM vibhoH vR^iShagiri mukheShveteShvicChAvadhi pratilabdhaye dR^iDha vinihitA nishreNistvaM daye nija parvabhiH" Lord Srinivasa incarnates in five forms (para, vyUha, vibhava, archa, and hArdha). Param denotes His form in Sri Vaikuntam. This is documented in the AShTAkShara mantra dhyAna slokam salutation "savyaM pAdaM prasArya shrita duritaharaM dakShiNaM kunjayitvA jAnunyAdhAya savyetaramitarabhujaM

nAgabhoge nidhAya pashcAdbahudhvayena pratibhaTashamane dhArayan sha~Nkha cakre devIbhUShAdi juShTo janayatu jagatAM sharma vaikuNThanAthaH”.



The import of this tribute is that Lord Narayana is seen in Sri Vaikuntam as seated on Adishesha with one foot hanging down and the other folded along with SrI Devi, BhUmi Devi and NIla Devi. He is adorned with the emblems of the discus and conch. Next comes the vyUha forms of Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. These are the forms that are responsible for the acts of SR^iShTi, stithi, and praLayam undertaken by Lord Narayana. He is also seen in reclining form in the milky ocean. This too is the vyUha form. Vibhava is the form that He takes in incarnations such as Rama, Krishna, Narasimha et al. Then comes the Hardha avataram, which denotes the Lord's residence as the indweller (antharyami) of all beings in the universe. The archa form denotes the murtis at various Divya Desams. The Divya Desams are glorified in this verse. Residence at these Divya Desams has the impact of gradually reforming the individual, and leading him to seek moksham through the adoption of Bhakti yogam or prapatti. This is elaborated upon in considerable detail in Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. In this context, Lord Narayana is visualized as a tree that bears luscious fruits. These fruits denote the puruShArthAs. One needs to arrive near the tree and climb it in order to lay hands on the fruits. How is it possible to climb this tree? We are short-statured and thus cannot climb this tree by ourselves. Therefore, we need an auxiliary aid for this purpose. Svami Desikan describes the role of Daya Devi and Her mahopakaram in this instance. In the concluding verse of the Varadaraja Panchasat, Svami Desikan declares "iti vihitamudAraM ve~NkaTeshena bhaktyA shR^iti subhagamidaM yaH stotrama~NgIkaroti karishikhariviTa~NkasthAyinaH kalpavR^ikShAt bhavati phalamasheShaM tasya hastApaceyam" The tribute "karishikhariviTa~NkasthAyinaH kalpavR^ikShAt" reflects the fact that Lord Varadaraja is the wish-fulfilling tree that resides on top of the elephant-shaped hill (karishikhari). This is a permanent wish fulfilling tree unlike other trees which may be seasonal or may exist for a time. This tree has the characteristic of making available bountiful fruits within one's reach as documented in the tribute "iti vihitamudAraM ve~NkaTeshena bhaktyA shR^iti subhagamidaM yaH stotrama~NgIkaroti" (One who embraces this stotram and recites it with focus, is sure to be graced by the wish-fulfilling tree resident on top of the elephant-shaped hill by making available all fruits within the reach of their arms.) Likewise, in this instance, Lord Srinivasa is visualized as the wish fulfilling tree. Here, we are short-statured and need an aid to access the fruit on offer from Lord Srinivasa. In the SaraNAgati DIpika Stotram Svami Desikan declares "udbAhubhAvamapahAya yathaiva kharvaH prAMshuM phalArthamabhiyAcati yogicintya evaM suduShkaramupAyagaNam vihAya sthAneniveshayati tasya vicakShaNastvAm".



The salutation "udbAhubhAvamapahAya yathaiva kharvaH" refers to a short statured individual seeking to partake of fruit that resides on an extremely tall tree. However, the fruit is not within reach and has to be accessed with help. In this instance, he requests a tall individual to pluck the fruit so that he can partake of it. What if the tall man plucks the fruit and keeps it to himself and does not give it to the short one? Rest assured that such an individual will not be approached for this purpose. Svami Desikan compares himself to the short statured one, in terms of being unable to conform to the onerous prescriptions of karma yogam, j~nAna yogam, and bhakti yogam. Instead, he submits a request to the tall man (Lord Narayana) to stand instead of these practices and grant him the same elevated benefit of moksham that is the privy of the Bhakti yogam practitioner. In the context of the present Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan states that one need not go seeking the help of a tall man. Instead Daya Devi functions as the ladder that can be climbed in a step-by-step manner to access the fruits on offer from the tree known as Lord Srinivasa. Rather than gaining from someone else, fruits collected from one's own effort acquire a completely different taste. In another instance, the Divya Dampatis of Srirangam are taking a walk along the banks of the Chandra PushkaraNi during which they stop by near the ponna maram (gold-bearing tree so to speak) as documented in the tribute "shrirangarajakaranamR^ita shAkhikAbhyo" Lord Ranganatha plucks a flower from this tree and places it on Thayar's hair as an adornment. Thayar enquires of Lord Ranganatha about this act to which Lord Ranganatha replies "This is no ordinary tree. It is the gold-bearing tree, which grew hearing Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi. The fragrance of the flower from this tree is consequently, uniquely enchanting. This is quite different from the fragrance of flowers yielded by ordinary trees. That is why I chose this flower as a decoration for Your hair." This is documented in Sri Rangaraja Sthavam by Sri Parashara Bhattar as a tribute by way of mangalasasanam to the tree. In a like fashion, the fruits gained by one's own efforts of reaching up a tree and plucking them have a singularly unique flavor. In this context, Daya Devi functions as a ladder replete with many steps that enables the short statured individual to climb up to reach the fruit-bearing branch. One of these steps corresponds to residence in a Divya Desam. Adopting residence at the Divya Desam gives rise to a yearning for Lord Srinivasa in a plethora of ways. For example, if one adopts residence in a Divya Desam one is routinely graced with the darsanam of Lord Narayana during the nitya utsavams at which time the utsava murti is brought out in procession. Thus, as long as one is not atheistic, the individual is guaranteed of bhagavad anubhavam in some form or another.



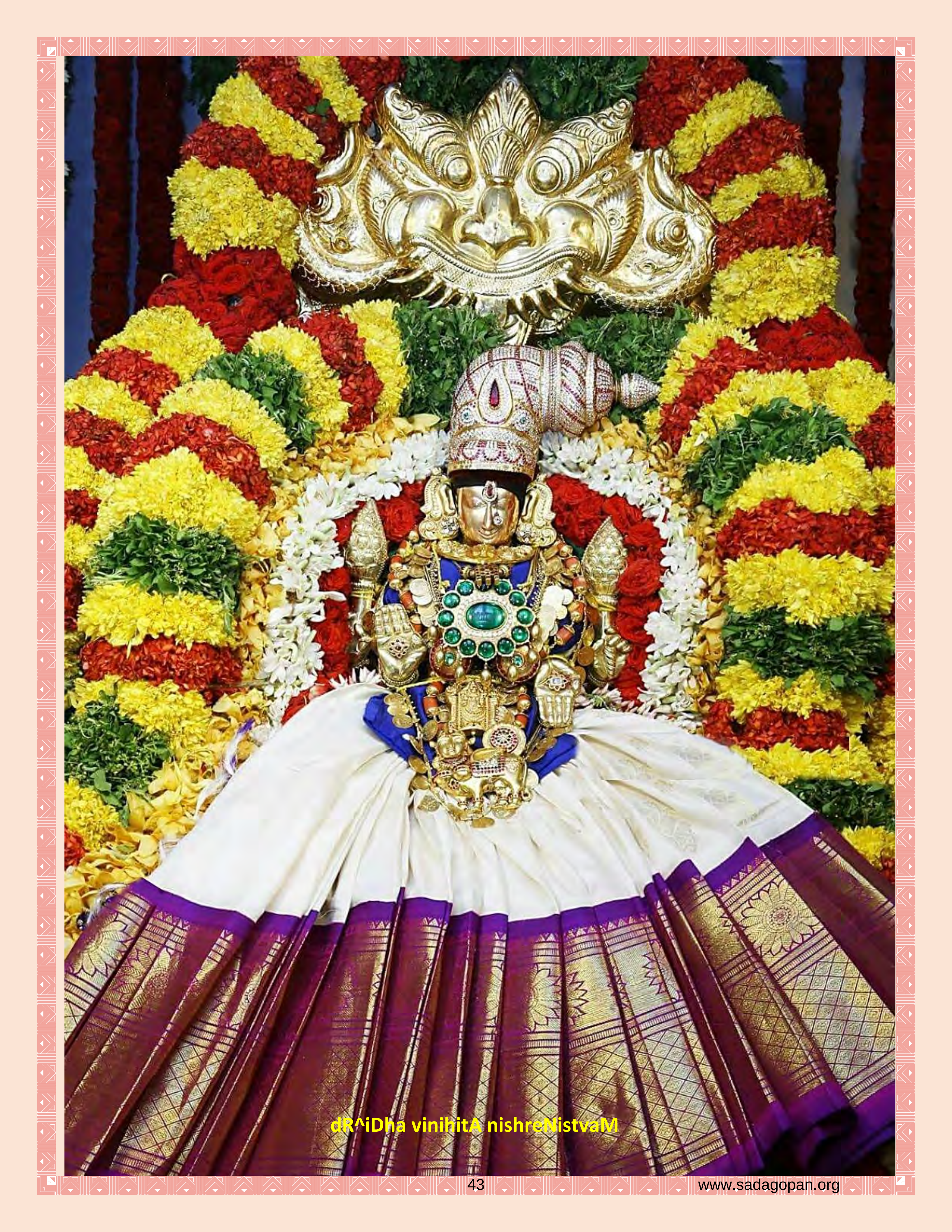
Thus, Divya Desa vasam is a valuable mechanism to bring one closer to Lord Narayana simply on account of the number of opportunities for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam on offer. This is documented in the tribute "svayamudayinaH sidhdAdhyA viShkR^itAscha shubhAlayAH vividha vibhava vyUhAvAsAH paraM ca padaM vibhoH" of this Daya Satakam verse. This describes the place where Lord Srinivasa has taken root. The salutation "svayamudayinaH" alludes to the fact that the Lord arrived at the Venkatam hill on His own accord. Therefore, kshetrams such as these are termed as svayam vyakta kshetrams. Others in this category include Srirangam, SrimushNam, Totadri, Salagramam, Pushkaram, BadarikAshramam, and Naimisharanyam. The Kanchi mAhatmyam describes Kanchipuram also as a svayam vyakta kshetram. The Lord took residence at these places on His own accord through AvirbhAvam. The salutation "sidhdAdhyA viShkR^itAscha shubhAlayAH" refers to the fact that the Lord arrived at these kshetrams to grace the Siddhas, Devas, and Rishis, who engaged in austerities to gain a darsanam of the Lord. Thus, the Divya Desams became sanctified on account of the tapas undertaken by these elevated individuals and the Lord arriving to grace them as a result. For example, Lord Dakshina Venkatesha took root at Oppiliappan Koil to grace Rishi Markandeya. Likewise in some other Divya Desams, the Lord arrived to grace Devas who had undertaken penance there. The fact that the Lord arrived in this manner to grace the Devas at these Divya Desams confers the status "saidham" to these kshethtrams. The Pancharatra Sastram categorizes the Divya Desams as svayam vyaktam, saiddham, daivam, and manusham. Saiddham denotes those kshetrams that acquire siddhi on account of Siddhas and Maharishis. Daivam denotes those kshetrams that come about due to devatas undertaking penance there to seek the grace of Lord Narayana. For example, Lord Narayana arrived as Varadaraja at Kanchipuram as a result of the yaj~nam undertaken by Brahma. This is an example of Daivam. Manusham denotes the class of kshetrams sanctified on account of the efforts of bhagavata uttamas (foremost Bhagavatas) and those that have been rendered sacred by mangalasasanams from Azhwars. In these Divya Desams, the Lord is described as "AviShkR^itAscha shubhAlayAH" denoting the fact that the Lord revealed His prescence at these Divya Desams. Next, we examine the tribute "vividha vibhava vyUhAvAsAH paraM ca padaM vibhoH". The salutation "vibhoH" refers to the fact that Lord Narayana is the master of the universe - one who is all pervasive, one who controls the existence and activities of all beings in the universe. He begets Vibhavam on account of His incarnations and due to His presence as the archa murti at various Divya Desams. Significantly, this does not come about from His eternal residence in Sri Vaikuntam.


Daya Devi is the Divine Ladder that helps us reach Moksha

Svami NammAzhvar salutes this aspect of Lord Narayana in the Tiruvaimozhi tribute "Ican vAnavarkku enban enRAl atu tEcAmO tiruvenkaDatAnukku nICanEn niRaionRumilEn en kaN pAsam vaitta paramcuDar cOtikkE" (The greatness of Lord Srinivasa comes about not on account of showering His grace upon nitya suris but due to the fact that He deems the lowliest of beings - adiyen, as worthy of His grace and brings me near to Him). Svami Desikan follows the lead of Svami NammAzhvar in capturing this sentiment in this Daya Satakam verse and declares that the glory for Lord Srinivasa arises not on account of His residence in Sri Vaikuntam but due to His numerous avatarams (Rama, Krishna, Narasimha et al) to grace those who have surrendered to Him through His residence as the arca murti at Divya Desams. Furthermore, it may be recalled that the Rg Vedam tribute 3.8.4 "saushreyAn bhavati jAyamAnaH" documents the fact that in each of His avatarams, the Lord acquires added fame due to His avataram coming about on account of His sankalpam, whereas all beings of the universe beget birth in accordance with their karma. Thus, our births represent a diminishing stature, whereas the Lord who incarnates each time acquires an increase in His stature. The inner meaning is that even though one may choose to stay away from the Lord, through His numerous acts of compassion, the Lord ensures that the individual gets closer and closer to Him. This is the underlying reason for the Lord acquiring added glory in each of His incarnations. It may also be remembered that this comes about entirely due to the grace of Daya Devi. Likewise, Divya Desams such as Ayodhya, and Mathura gain added sanctity due to the fact that Lord is ever present in these places and is anxiously waiting to grace his seekers. This sentiment is echoed in the tribute "mathurA nAma nagarI puNyA pApahara shubha yatrA nityaM sannihito hariH" (The city named Mathura is sacred/auspicious because it is capable of destroying one's sins.) The reason for this is that even if one has sinned greatly, if one visits Mathura and performs snanam in the Yamuna river, one gets cleansed of all of their sins. Upon destruction of one's sins, all auspiciousness springs forth. All this comes about due to the fact that Lord Narayana is ever-present here. Thus, the avatara sthalams of Ayodhya and Mathura acquire sacredness due to the Lord's unceasing presence. Next comes the tribute "vibhoH paraM ca padaM". The all-pervading Lord Narayana occupies the elevated place of Sri Vaikuntam as the master. These Divya Desams as well as Parama Padam, glorious as they are, they are topped by Lord Srinivasa's residence in the Venkatam hill as described by the tribute "vR^iShagiri mukheShu eteShu" of the present Daya Satakam verse. The reason for this will become apparent later on. In all the Divya Desams mentioned above Lord Narayana stands ready to grace us as outlined in the tribute "arcitArtha paridhAna

dIkShitaH" The Lord has taken root at these Divya Desams only to grant the purushArthams of Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha sought by His supplicants. The tribute "icChAvadhi pratilabdhaye" from this Daya Satakam verse highlights this fact. The "icChAvadhi" salutation also refers to the fact that the ultimate puruShArtha of moksham is definitely granted to sharaNagatas. Not only this, in accordance with one's bhakti, the fruits that need to accrue to those seeking the Lord at these Divya Desams, is also unfailingly granted. This is the import of the "icChAvadhi pratilabdhaye" salutation. This also refers to the fact that the Lord has no quotas or limits on how much He grants and to how many He grants the Purusharthas. He is saluted as "koLLa kuRaivilan vENDittellAm tarum kOtilan" in the Azhvar pasuram. This too is captured in the "icChAvadhi pratilabdhaye" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. Additionally, this tribute alludes to the fact that the power of Lord Narayana to grant desired purushArthas is limitless. It is not diminished in any way regardless of the number of people to whom He grants these purushArthas.

This Daya Satakam verse further visualizes the wish fulfilling Lord resident in these Divya Desams as a tree bearing luscious fruit. The question is how to reach up and pluck the fruit from this tree? Daya Devi functions as a ladder for this purpose as highlighted in the salutation "nija parvabhiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. Specifically, this ladder is replete with a number of steps. Depending on one's bhakti, they may climb up all the way or stop after a few steps. Daya Devi ensures that they get the fruits in accordance with their bhakti corresponding to the number of steps they climb. Thus, in this instance, the footsteps of the ladder correspond to one's bhakti. The tribute "dR^iDha vinihitA nishreNistvaM" notes the difference between the ladder known as Daya Devi and a common ladder. Common ladders have a finite time span after which they wear out. Due to repeated use, the footrest at the various steps can break. Additionally, the wall supports of the ladder too can wear out due to usage. However, the Daya ladder is available for all time and remains unchanged regardless of the number of people that climb up. A common ladder can cause one to slip and fall. However, the Daya ladder provides a firm foothold ensuring that one does not slip and enables a steady step-by-step progression all the way to moksham. The steps in a ladder are useful for climbing up as well as getting down. In the context of the Daya Devi ladder, She enables common beings like us to climb up. At the same time, this ladder is a convenient mechanism for the descent of Lord Srinivasa. It is the ladder of Daya Devi that Lord Srinivasa uses to descend from Sri Vaikuntam and take on the arca avatarams, hardha avatarams, and the like.


dR^iDha vinihitA nishreNistvaM

For those who attain Sri Vaikuntam through arcirAdhi mArgam due to the performance of either Bhakti yogam or prapatti, there is no return to earthly existence in accordance with the Chandogya Upanishad statement "na ca punarAvartate na cha punarAvartate". If one has to return from a place, it can be only on account of two reasons. First among them is that the residents of the place deem that the individual has spent sufficient time and that he needs to go back to where he came from. Second is that the individual gets tired of the place and desires a return. In the case of those attaining Sri Vaikuntam as described here, Lord Narayana never wants to let go of them and send them back to the earth as described in the salutation "j~nAnivAtmaivate matham". On the other hand, He facilitates their permanent residence in Sri Vaikuntam whereby they can constantly enjoy His grace and take delight in rendering kaimkaryam to the Divine Couple. The individual too takes delight in rendering eternal kaimkaryam and is never satiated. Also, the incentive to leave one place for another comes about only if the new destination has something better to offer than the present place of residence. In this instance, there is nothing superior to the benefit of attaining residence in Sri Vaikuntam and rendering eternal kaimkaryam for the Divya Dampatis. Therefore, there is no incentive to leave Sri Vaikuntam. Therefore, the residence in Sri Vaikuntam for those who get there through arcirAdhi mArgam is in the manner of "na ca punarAvartate na ca punarAvartate" (Point of no return). Svami Desikan goes a step further in the tribute "vR^iShagiri mukheShu eteShu" to elaborate on the fact that "nitya suris" in Sri Vaikuntam desire to offer their prostrations to Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill. This sentiment is echoed by Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi salutation "imayOr atipatiyE" denoting the fact that the Chief of the Nitya Suris is Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root at the Venkatam hill. This is further evidenced in the tribute "ennALum ninRimayOrgalEtti iRainji inaminamAi meinA manattAl vazhipADu ceyyum tiruvEnkaDattAnE". (Nitya Suris celebrate the glory and render praise of Lord Srinivasa. They arrive in large numbers to prostrate before Lord Srinivasa. They offer their salutations through mei nA-mind, body, and speech.) Thus, in order to ensure that lowly beings like us can become privy to the grace of Lord Srinivasa of such loftiness, Daya Devi serves as a ladder to facilitate access. This concludes our exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"The Lord, who is at the top, namely Paramapada descends down in various forms:

1. svayamvyakta murtis and similar arca forms in various shrines at the behest of Siddha seers.

2. Various avataras (known as Vibhava) such as Matsya, Rama and others.

3. VyUha forms such as Sankarshana et al.

4. Hardha form-as the indweller of all beings

5. Above all as the arca murti at the Venkatam hill, counted among the arca forms

These constitute a ladder of easy steps through which one can ascend. You are his ladder, strong and capable of sustaining one's ascent. The rungs of the ladder constitute different stages of fulfillment. This verse is also suggestive of the fact that the Lord's descent into this world is on account of the Daya Devi ladder. So too is the ascent of a devotee through different stages conferred by Daya Devi. The rungs of the Daya Devi ladder correspond to the different stages."



Slokam 74

हितमिति जगद्दृष्ट्या क्लृप्तैरक्लृप्त फलान्तरैः

अमति विहितैरन्यैर्धर्मायितैश्च यदृच्छया ।

परिणत बहुच्छद्मा पद्मासहाय दये स्वयं

प्रदिशसि निजाभिप्रेतं नः प्रशाम्यदपत्रपा ॥ ७४ ॥

hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptair aklupta phalAntaraiH
amati vihitair anyair dharmaayitaischa yadR^icChayA|
pariNata bahucChadmA padmA sahAya daye svayaM
pradishasi nijAbhipretaM naH prashAmyad apatrapA||74



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

Daya Devi's upakaram for us in terms of a ladder was described in the previous verse. She renders Her upakarams for us in many ways - especially for sharaNagatas,who seek the ultimate bliss of eternal kaimkaryam for the Divine Couple in Sri Vaikuntam. On the other hand, we try our best to stay away from Lord Srinivasa. Instead, we are caught up in the swirl of Samsaram causing us to believe that the experiences of pain and pleasure in this world are the only things of importance. This causes us to seek ways for bettering our lot in the present world that we exist, which is what we consider as ultimate purushArtha. This is not something that we are engaged in for a day or two. Instead, it has been in vogue for a long time involving innumerable births spanning eons of time. Even for beings like us, Daya Devi desires to grant the ultimate purushArtha of moksham. However, to deserve this, an eligibility criterion is called on our part.

Specifically, Daya Devi submits an evocative appeal on our behalf to Lord Srinivasa to grant moksham. However, even though Lord Srinivasa is inclined to grant the request, He is unable to due to the fact that He only seems to find the individual to be replete with numerous faults. To this Daya Devi responds "Who says that this individual is bereft of guNams? I shall enumerate them for You Svami." She specifically states that even though the individual has sinned greatly, he has performed some good acts. These good acts would yield results that ensure that the individual reaps full benefit from them. For example, an individual may be a total atheist. However, on account of some good act, he may be endowed with

great wealth. In this instance, his good act has resulted in an accumulation of a great deal of wealth, thereby exhausting all the consequences of his good act.

However, Daya Devi seizes upon all such instances for an individual and highlights them to Lord Srinivasa. Thereby She ensures that the individual begets the parama purushArtha of moksham. This in a nutshell is the import of this Daya Satakam verse. This verse is "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptair aklupta phalAntaraiH amati vihitair anyair dharmAyitaischa yadR^icChayA pariNata bahucChadmA padmA sahAya daye svayaM pradishasi nijAbhipretaM naH prashAmyad apatrapA||". Kids usually accumulate money by putting it in a piggy bank. These days even banks offer novel schemes for accomplishing this. After the money attains significant value, it can be used for expenses incurred by the child. Instead of saving the money, if the child had the money to spend, it would be expended on frivolous causes. Instead accumulating the money makes the amount significant and enables putting the money to use for a good cause. In a like manner, Daya Devi accumulates all the good acts committed by jivans like us. The accumulation of these good acts is highlighted in the proper context by Daya Devi to Lord Srinivasa. She specifically uses this to impress upon Lord Srinivasa that the jivan accumulated good acts make him deserving of moksham. The tribute "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptaiH" from the present Daya Satakam verse illustrates the fact that the little acts of piety engaged in by the jivan are accumulated by Daya Devi. In this context, there are five kinds of sukrutams (good acts). These are prAsangika sukrutam, anushangika sukrutam, abuddhipUrvaka sukrutam, yadhrucChika sukrutam, and finally sAmAnya buddhimUla sukrutam. Even if one may have sinned greatly, one may have performed at some point any one of these five kinds of sukrutam.

The tribute "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptaiH" denotes the fact that according to the commonly accepted universal standard, one may engage in certain good acts. This is called prAsangika sukrutam. For example, one may engage in the construction of a well or a pond to offer water to humans and animals. Participating in such an act either through a financial contribution or by hands-on engagement through bodily effort in the task of construction is known as prAsangika sukrutam. It is well known that engaging in this type of activity is good. However, the results of such a good act are hard to discern. Specifically, it is impossible to quantify the benefit accruing from such an act and identify when the benefit comes about. Thus, not knowing the consequence or time of arrival of the fruit for such an action, if one engages in a good act, it is in the manner of "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptaiH" In another instance, one may be engaged in the task of anna dhAnam.



Another who may not have the means to undertake this nonetheless gets motivated and makes a small contribution with a request to be included in this noble task is another instantiation of "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptaiH", namely undertaking a noble task by commonly accepted standards. The next salutation from this Daya Satakam verse "aklupta phalAntaraiH" denotes anushangika sukrutam. For example, the result of a good act of one Bhagavata accruing to another is an example of anushangika sukrutam. Specifically, if a learned one known to us, who has undergone formal adhyayanam is walking amidst great discomfort in sweltering heat, welcoming him to one's home, offering him water and providing fan service to soothe him from the heat is an act of puNyam. If this learned one is accompanied by another learned one, not known to us but is similarly welcomed and offered the same courtesy, the sukrutam arising from this act is described by the salutation "aklupta phalAntaraiH" This is the anushangika sukrutam. Next, the tribute "amati vihitaiH" from this Daya Satakam verse describes the abuddhipUrvaka acts of puNyam (good acts that are performed unknowingly). One may ask here that it is difficult to knowingly engage in good acts. How then could one possible engage in good acts unknowingly? For example, a fisherman is engaged in the act of collecting fish in the Ganga river. By accident, his fishing net falls into the river. The fisherman descends into the Ganga river to retrieve his net. In the process he performs Ganga snAnam and continues the act of fishing. Even so, the time that he took a dip in the Ganga river by sheer happenstance (to recover the net), corresponding to the time of eclipse (arbodayam/mahodayam). Then, he begets a great puNyam of having performed Ganga snAnam at the time of eclipse. This act of puNyam came about unknowingly and in an unplanned manner due to sheer accident. This is known as abuddhipUrvaka sukrutam. Next comes the salutation "yadR^icChayA dharmAyitaischa" of this Daya Satakam verse, which describes the act undertaken unintentionally. For example, one may set out to do something. In the process, the individual accidentally performs a good act. Let's say one visits the kshetram of Srirangam to attend an auspicious occasion in one's family such as a wedding or upanayanam. In the process, the individual decides to go to the Temple of Ranganatha and not only that also decides to seek the blessings of his Acharya. It is common to state that "I came to attend an auspicious occasion in my family as a by-product of which I was able to get a darshan of Lord Ranganatha and my Acharyan" but not the other way around. This sort of a good act is known as yadrucCha sukrutam.





For instance, if one is going on an errand and on the way encounters a Veda parayaNa ghoshti. Let's say the individual did not have time to properly prostrate before the ghoshti but hurriedly undertakes a pradakshiNam (clockwise circumambulation) of the ghoshti. This becomes a yadhrucCha sukrutam. The Sastras state that when one sees sumangali women, Veda parayana ghoshti, and Brahmanas, one must undertake a pradakshiNam to them as a mark of respect. If this comes about in an unexpected manner it is yadhrucCha sukrutam. Next comes the salutation "anyair dharmaayitaischa". For example, if one is engaged in anna dhAnam, those who are hungry are prime candidates for receiving this according to the statement "annasya kShuditam pAtram". In that group if there happens to be a great Brahmavit, who has performed extensive adhyayanam of the Vedam, who happened to be there by sheer accident and no planning on the part of the performer of the anna dhanam, a great benefit accrues to the performer. This is a major sukrutam. Now Daya Devi turns to Lord Srinivasa and states "You have decreed that this individual has sinned greatly and has not undertaken even a single noble act that is worthy of Your grace. However, I shall enumerate his numerous good acts, which have been accumulated as if in a piggy bank. Not one of them has yielded fruit as yet! In the manner of "hitamiti jagad dhR^iShTayA kluptaiH" he has taken part through a token contribution (either monetarily or through bodily effort) in the performance of several noble tasks such as digging of wells and ponds to offer water to thirsty beings. This has earned him puNyam. He has offered relief from the sweltering heat to people he knows and a great Bhagavata accompanying these people, who is unknown to him. This earns him even more puNyam. This is his anushangika puNyam. Without his knowledge, he has performed Ganga snanam and Samudra snanam during puNya kalam such as grahaNam. This accrues abuddhipUrvaka sukrutam. As per local parlance in Kanchipuram, he happened to arrive in order to purchase "ettha kOl". However, in a totally unplanned manner, he managed to get a darsanam of Garuda Sevai for Lord Varadaraja. Thereby, he has gained yadrucCha sukrutam. His noble acts are not limited to these few instances. In a like fashion, he has undertaken numerous good acts. All of them are yet to bear fruit. The accumulation of all these acts results in a mountainous pile of good acts. If he is deemed unfit for moksham, who would You consider worthy of moksham Svami?"

This dR^iShTAntam elucidated by Svami Desikan through an appeal from Daya Devi to Lord Srinivasa is known as "kaLatthu mODu", that which arises when paddy is harvested from crop. These days even though a machine is used to sift the grain, the place where the paddy is brought and purified is still known as "kaLatthu



mODu". People bring the crop and after collecting the grain leave for their homes. The remnants from the paddy, which is mixed with sand and the like is then taken by other poor people, who come to the kaLatthu mODu to clean up the place. With some effort, when the grain is separated from the contaminants, it serves as food for a couple of days due to the accumulation of large quantities of residual grain. In a like manner Daya Devi accumulates the good karma for an individual from his numerous births in various forms and highlights this to Lord Srinivasa as a significant collection of good acts on the part of the individual. She then submits the appeal to Lord Srinivasa that the individual due to this collection of good acts is a fitting receptacle for the grace of Lord Srinivasa.



The tribute "nijAbhipretaM naH" from this Daya Satakam verse refers to the fact that the intent of Daya Devi is to ensure that all beings in the universe attain moksham. She brings this to fruition by demonstrating to Lord Srinivasa an accumulation of good acts on the part of an individual, rather than expending the good acts by granting them trivial benefits in accordance with each act. This sets the stage for Daya Devi to formally request the boon of moksham for the individual from Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi gains delight when as a result of Her efforts described herein, She causes an individual to resort to Bhakti yogam or Prapatti with the sole objective of gaining moksham. In fact, She considers it a slur against Her if She is unable to successfully make the case of moksham for the individual and is quite ashamed due to this. The import of this verse is that Daya Devi rids Herself of this shame by ensuring that even common individuals like us are able to gain moksham. Again, the anubhavam of Sri Parashara Bhattar with Ranganayaki Thayar is quoted here "An individual has to go from the northern entrance to the southern side of the temple. If one were to take the route from Uttara Veedi to Chithra Veedi, the commute is rather long. Thinking of this, the individual decides to take the short cut through the inner route of the Temple. During this sojourn, the individual submits a prayer with folded hands in Anjali mudra and performs a pradakshiNam for Ranganayaki Thayar.





This simple act on the part of the individual is viewed as something that has been undertaken with a great deal of effort and Thayar stands ready to reward him with every conceivable benefit including moksham and yet thinks She has not done enough. She yearns to grant him more. Sri Parashara Bhattar describes this through the salutation "kasmaichidanjali bharaM vahate vitIrya" depicting the fact that for the offering of a prayerful submission with folded hands that requires considerable effort, Ranganayaki Thayar is ready to offer him everything he wants and more (aishvaryam, kaivalyam, and moksham) as documented in the salutation "aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramaM padaM vA" but yet feels that She has not done enough as documented in the salutation "asmai na kinchiducitaM kR^itamityAthAmba!". Sri Parashara Bhattar expresses his astonishment at the act of Thayar and exclaims that he is at a loss for words upon beholding the compassion of Ranganayaki Thayar as documented in the tribute "tvaM lajjase kathaya ko(a)yamudAra bhAvaH" Svami Desikan goes a step further in this verse in that at least the individual in question in Sri Parashara Bhattar's tribute has offered a prayer to Thayar with folded hands. However, here it is not known if the individual submitted a prayerful offering with folded hands. Instead Daya Devi highlights an accumulation of all the acts of goodness undertaken by the individual and makes the case that the individual deserves the ultimate purushArtham of moksham resulting in ceaseless Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Thus, Daya Devi comes to one's rescue in a plethora of ways. With this prayerful offering we request that Daya Devi's grace falls upon all of us and we conclude the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:



"The Daya flow towards an individual is initiated by a series of steps in a chain process. A good deed however small and done unknowingly too may be the first step. The Lord takes such a small step as very significant and sets in an array of Daya-conferring, Daya-informed blessings. It is impossible to designate such a chain of fortunate steps as purely nirhetuka (causeless). If we were to do so, we would not be able to account for a similar chain being absent for another individual. That is, we would attribute this to an act of partiality on the part of Lord Srinivasa (vaiShamya doSham for one who is known to be pakSha pAthAna bhigyam).

aj~nAta sukrutam is a concept. Azhvar Tiruvaimozhi 10.8.1 reminds us that his spelling out the name of Tirumaliruncholai in a casual, accidental manner, causes the Lord to enter the Azhvar's heart and reside therein. This verse lists a variety of good deeds that could possibly arise in an individual. The Lord waits for one such a force of a good deed, a pretext to enter our hearts and our life so to speak.

Oh Daya Devi! You step in; You seek to find some good in me; some pretext, more precisely. You then recommend my case to the Lord. You make Him confer upon me what is good. This good is evolved in Your own imaginative convolution of thinking process. What is good for me is the criterion. You do so much for us.

1. Good, as believed in the world includes acts such as construction of Temples and digging tanks and wells.

2. While undertaking a good deed, as a by-product, additional good may arise unintentionally.

3. While on a routine mundane act, one happens to perform a holy act; for example, while chasing a cow accidentally a pradakshiNa of a temple comes about.

4. While on the errand of a mundane act, one happens to perform a holy act, feeding a friendly guest, who is known to be a great Bhagavata.

5. All these acts are designated in this verse. The fundamental point herein is that when we are not conscious of the nature of an act, Daya reckons the good and induces the Lord to take note and encourage the person towards more good."



Slokam 75

अतिविधिशिवैरैश्वर्यात्मानुभूतिरसैर्जनान्

अहृदयमिहोपच्छन्द्यैषामसङ्गदशार्थिनी ।

तृषितजनतातीर्थस्नानक्रमक्षपितैनसां

वितरसि दये वीतातङ्का वृषाद्रिपतेः पदम् ॥ ७५ ॥

atividhishivairaishvaryAtmAnubhUti rasairjanAn
ahR^idayamihopacChandyaiShAmasa~NgadashArthinI|
tR^iShitajanatatiIrthasnAnakramakShapitainasAM
vitarasi daye vItAta~NkA vR^iShAdripateH padam||75



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

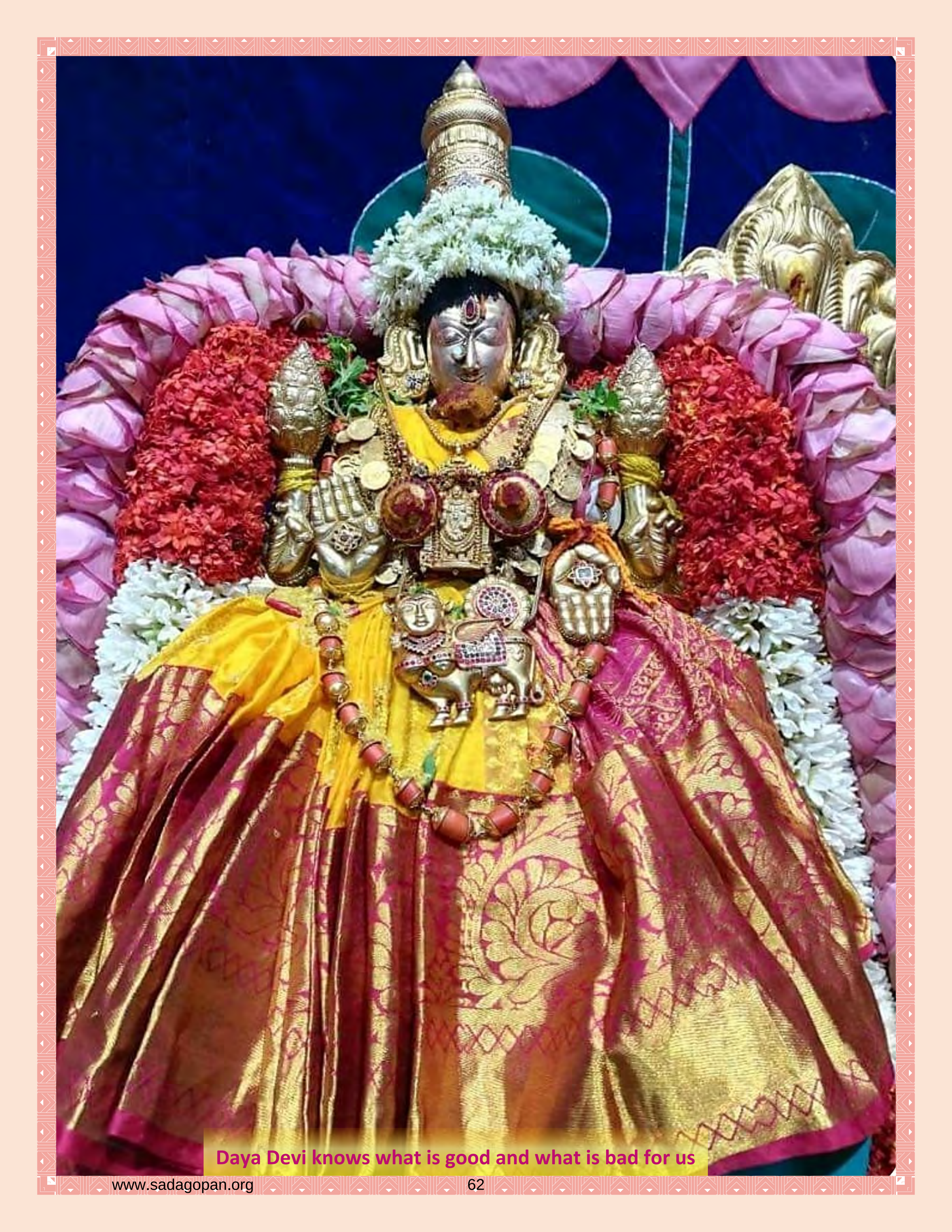
"Lord Srinivasa out of His overbearing desire to protect us, inherently possesses an abundance of compassion. Some individuals may be compassionate for a short while at times. However, these instances may be few and far between. On the other hand, Lord Srinivasa is always filled with compassion. Additionally, He is known as "vrAtharakshaikadIkShe" due to His sworn position to unfailingly protect those who have surrendered to Him. All that is called for is "rakShApekSham pratIkShate" denoting the fact that Lord Srinivasa merely expects an appeal for protection and is waiting for this appeal to bestow His daya flow.

Due to the Lord's disposition of yearning to rescue His supplicants, even if they did not ask for Moksham, Daya Devi accumulates the little acts of good committed by the supplicant and highlight this as a significant good act. Using this as pretext, She requests Lord Srinivasa to confer upon them the elevated boon of Moksham. This was the purport of the previous verse. It is important to understand two points in this context - siddhopAyam and sAdhyopAyam. Lord Srinivasa serves as the means as well as the end. It is not due to any doing on our part. The Vedam declares "yamevaiSha vR^iNute tena labhyaH" (Only one that is chosen by the Lord is able to attain Him). Thus, Lord Srinivasa's sankalpam becomes extremely important in this instance. It is entirely due to His sankalpam that He causes supplicants to seek Him and grants them moksham. He also serves as the means for them to gain moksham. siddhopAyam is the import of the exposition thus far.



Daya Devi strives to ensure Her devotees are blessed with Moksham

Next comes the issue of sAdhyopAyam. Specifically, since the Vedam declares that only one chosen by the Lord can gain moksham, is it then acceptable for one to merely wait for Bhagavad Sankalpam to ordain that their turn for moksham has arrived and do nothing in the interim? Svami Desikan answers this quite emphatically in the negative. In order to invoke the grace of Lord an act on our part is called for. That is when we will be blessed by the Lord. Specifically, the act of Bhakti yogam or Prapatti is treated as a pretext by the Lord to shower His grace and grant moksham. This is known as sAdhyopayam. The act of Bhakti yogam or Prapatti causes the Lord to develop a favorable disposition towards the individual resulting in the torrential flow of His grace, which grants moksham. This is a sUkShmArtham (hidden meaning) of the Sastram as it pertains to sAdhyopAyam. Thus, there is no ambiguity about the fact that sAdhyopAyam is necessary to invoke the grace of Lord Srinivasa, who is the siddhopayam, to readily grant moksham. The reason for the Lord to develop a favorable disposition towards one who has adopted sAdhyppayam is undoubtedly Daya Devi. This is the import of the previous verse. However, do all supplicants come to Daya Devi seeking moksham? The answer is most definitely no. Instead, they look for a plethora of worldly pleasures and benefits after enjoying which, they may become inclined to seek moksham. Even with respect to these people, it is Daya Devi's intense desire to bring them on the right path and seek moksham, after realizing the transient nature of other benefits that they dearly long for. She accomplishes this task by first granting them all they desire and then causing them to realize the transient nature of these comforts so much so that they develop a disposition of utter disgust towards these and seek out the lasting wealth of eternal Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This verse is "atividhi shivair aishvaryAtmAnubhUti rasairjanAn AhR^idayam iha upacChandyaiShAM asa~Nga dashArthinI tR^iShita janatA tIrtha snAna krama kShapitainasAM vitarasi daye vItAta~NkA vR^iShAdri pateH padam". Daya Devi knows what is good and what is bad for us. Therefore, we should accept whatever She confers upon us. For example, when a sick person is examined by a doctor, the prescribed medicine may be bitter or sweet. Additionally, painful injections may be required to rid the patient of the disease. The doctor adopts a course of treatment with the sole objective of ridding the patient of illness. Likewise, Daya Devi's sole objective is to reform suffering baddha jivans and rid them of their seemingly endless cycle of births and deaths. She is fully aware of the course of action required for each individual and thus follows the prescribed path for each individual. Due to the glorification "pradishasi nijAbhipretaM" from the previous verse, Daya Devi is well aware of what is good and what is bad for each individual.

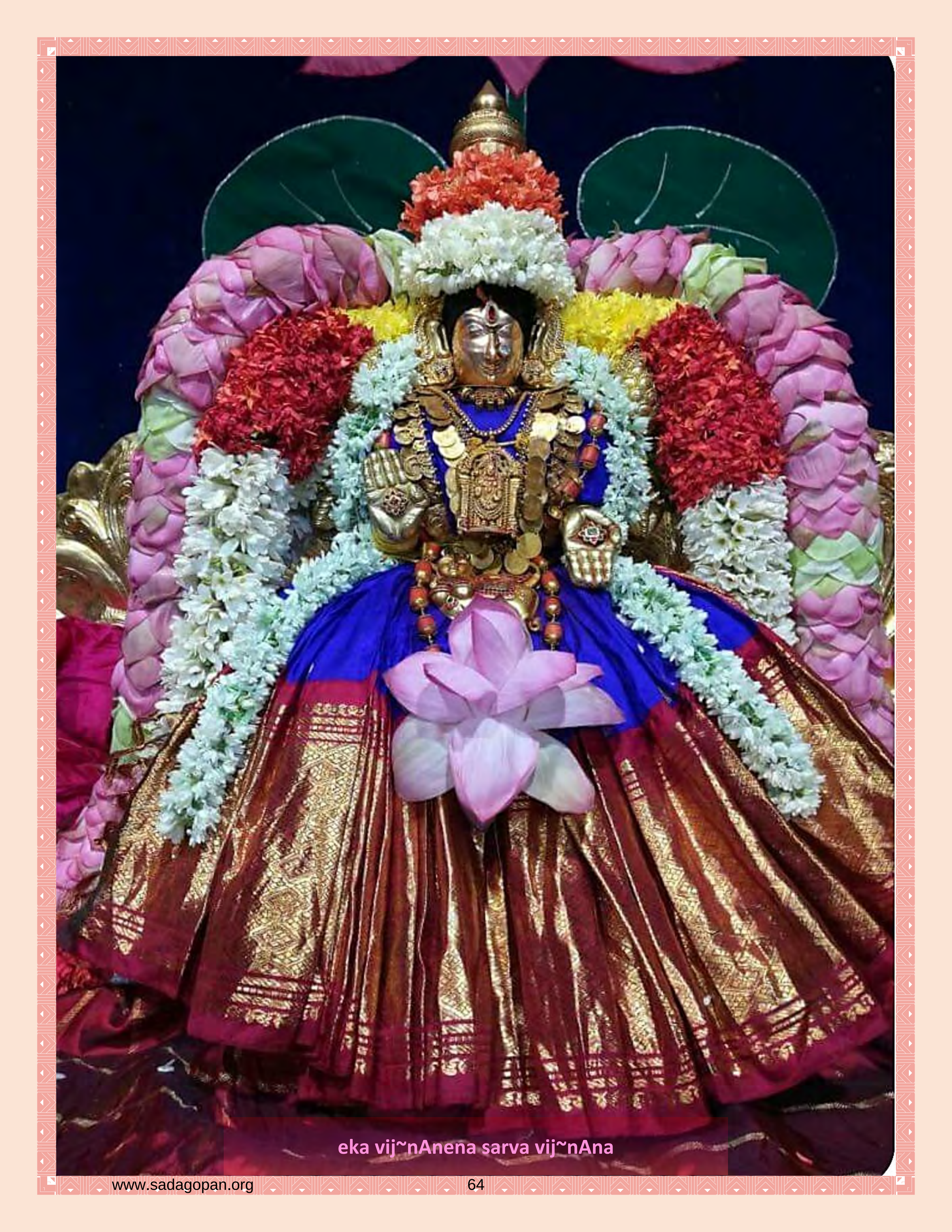


Daya Devi knows what is good and what is bad for us

In this context, She considers it Her mission to ensure that these suffering jivans seek the ultimate puruShArtham of moksham and enables them to gain it. An important point to be noted in this regard is the process by which Daya Devi reforms errant baddha jivans. For instance, we attend upanyasams and kalakshepams to gain wisdom from learned scholars. Their instructions emphasize the performance of trikAla sandhya, undertaking dharma kAryams, always being engaged in Bhagavad kaimkaryam, being devoid of the sense of I and my (ahankaram and mamakAram), never getting dejected and always exhibiting enthusiasm for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, not refraining from engaging in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam on some pretext or the other, and realizing that engaging in such kaimkaryam confers upon us the status of princes. When hearing this message, it sounds extremely convincing. However, a little while later it invariably gives rise to the reasoning "The scholar expounded on a set of truths in his upanyasam. However, as a practical matter is it possible to shake free from the shackles of laukIka life like going to work and being engaged in worldly matters?" This causes one to go back to their old ways.

The reason for this is either a lack of understanding of one's svarUpam (essential nature) or even having realized one's svarUpam, one is still engaged in ways and deeds that are totally opposed to their svarUpam due to strong prevailing vAsanAs (tendencies to gravitate towards the forbidden acts). These are the main causes for one to be entangled in samsAra and engaged in the performance of acts that are totally opposed to one's svarUpam. The vAsanAs can be understood from the example of a fan which is spinning. When switched off, it still takes a while for the fan to stop spinning. The role of vAsanAs is similar in that even if one has attained knowledge of one's svarUpam, it takes a while to root out tendencies opposed to one's svarUpam. As a consequence, one is engaged in these forbidden acts. The ultimate puruShArtham is that of ceaseless Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. The bliss arising from kaimkaryam to Bhagavan and His Bhagavatas is most enjoyable. Instead, we hanker after trivial pleasures and consider them to be the ultimate goal. Daya Devi showers Her grace precisely to rid us of these tendencies. This is described in detail in this verse of the Daya Satakam.

Svami Desikan's exposition on dR^iShTAntams (defining perspectives) is matchless. The practices underlying the Sri Vaishnava tradition are not subject to change in accordance with commonly accepted norms of the world. When one examines the Upanishads for example, quite often one finds that the Upanishad extol an object or thing in the universe and then use this to make an important point about Bhagavad viShayam.



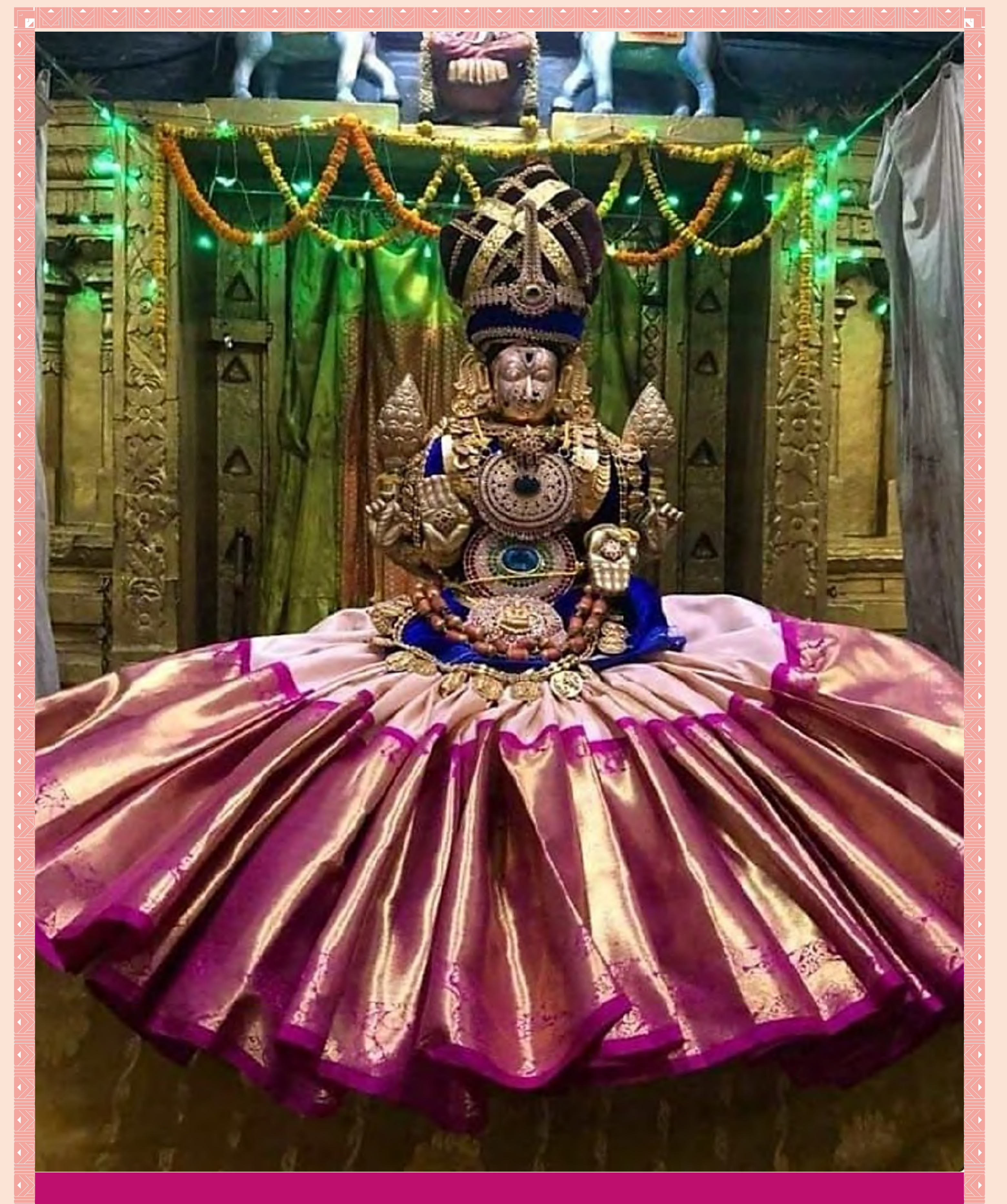
eka vij~nAnena sarva vij~nAna

This is known as "eka vij~nAnena sarva vij~nAna" (If one understands one thing, they understand everything.) This is highlighted through an example. Clay is the essential ingredient in making pots and other utensils. In a like manner, it must be understood that Brahman (Supreme Being) is the cause for everything in the universe. Svami Desikan follows the path outlined by the Upanishads to make his point pertaining to Bhagavad Vishayam through a commonly accepted worldly example. It is quite common for kids to have a couple of holidays for school ahead of their exams. However, on the day before their exam, there is the prospect of an absorbing game of cricket on offer, which greatly appeals to the kids. The game while no doubt exciting, will take away valuable exam preparation time from the kids. Thus, the mother of the kids offers them the reward of watching the cricket game if they complete their studies the previous day. This act on the part of the mother, which satisfies the desires of her kids, while at the same time accomplishes her objective is known as "upacandanam". Another example is the promise of reward by one's father conditional on the individual excelling in his studies.



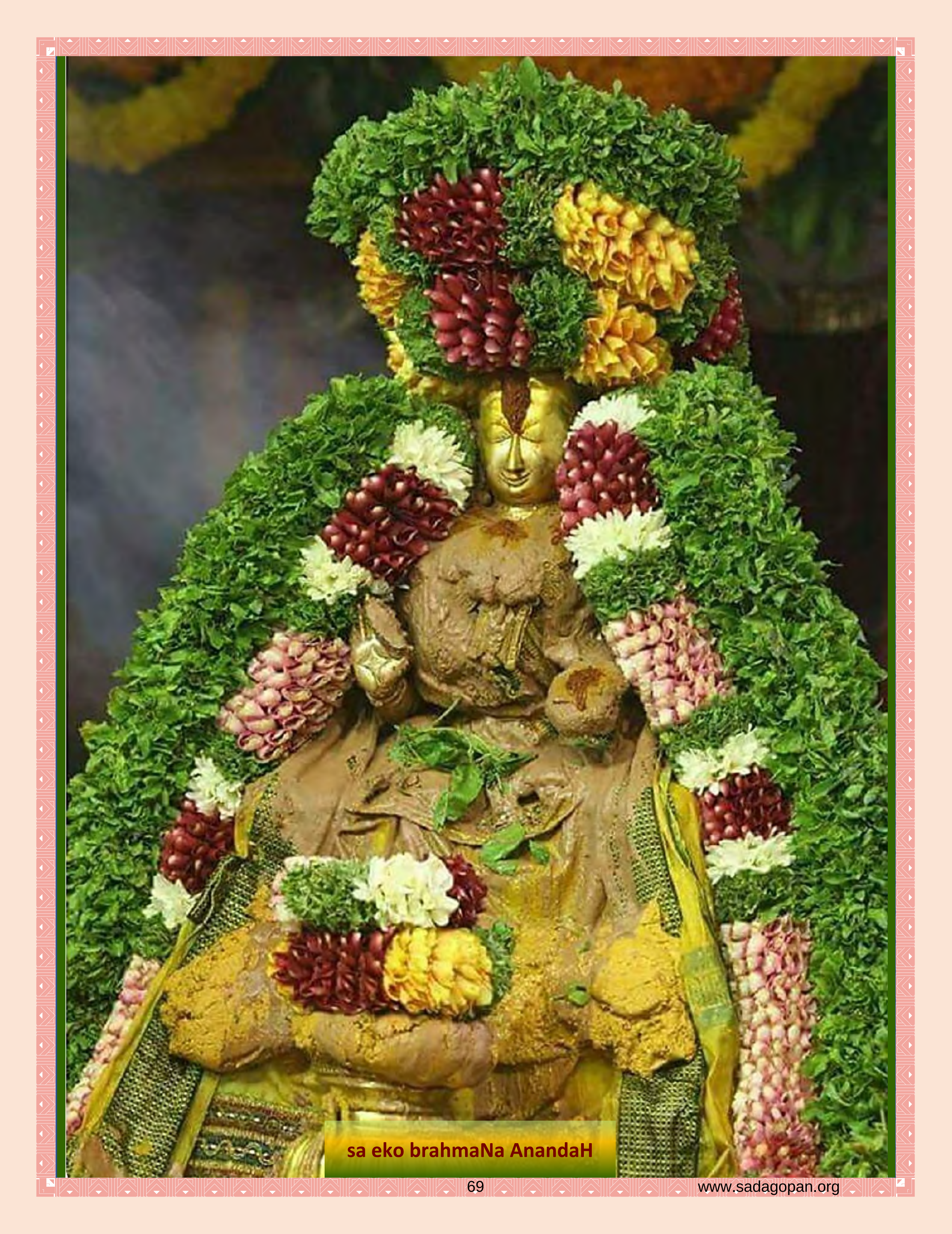
Daya Devi confers upon us all that we seek in terms of material comforts and wealth

Svami Desikan demonstrates an application of this principle with respect to Bhagavad Vishayam. Specifically, the salutation "ativdhi shivair aishvaryAtmAnubhUti rasaiH" highlights the fact that Daya Devi confers upon us all that we seek in terms of material comforts and wealth. Most commonly, if one is offered the choice between moksham and material comforts, one would opt for the latter rather than the former. Daya Devi first grants the individual their desires from a material perspective and then ensures that they realize the transient nature of these benefits, in that they only last for a while and that they are destructible. This causes the individuals to develop a sense of disgust in that their efforts have been engaged in trivial pursuits. Daya Devi then induces them to seek out the lasting purushArtham of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, which is indestructible, and leads them to moksham. It is quite common for residents in India to desire for travel overseas to lands of opportunity in order to acquire great wealth. However, the residents of those foreign lands, who immigrated from India, aver that it is far better to remain in a village in India than to be subservient to some unknown individual in a foreign land. Thus, those who have acquired wealth in foreign lands come to realize its transitory nature, and actively seek to discourage others from following the same path. Therefore, it is possible for one who greatly longed for a given benefit to sour from the experience and develop a sense of not wanting it anymore. This comes about only after the experience of travel to the foreign land and undergoing travails in the process of gaining wealth. In the instance of the present Daya Satakam verse, Daya Devi first grants the seekers all they want in terms of material wealth and allied comforts. After a while, the individual sours from the experience and realizes the transient nature of these benefits causing them to be dispassionate about these benefits and instead seeking the lasting benefit of uninterrupted Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, which confers eternal delight. This is the import of the tribute "ativdhi shivair aishvaryAtmAnubhUti rasairjanAn" which states that common people are first rendered happy by Daya Devi granting them their desires. Here it may be asked is there a tAratamyam (upper limit) to happiness? Some people may be of the disposition that due to anugraham of Bhagavan they have been blessed with sufficient material wealth and that they have even been able to set apart a portion of their earning for their future after their working days. Thus, they are quite content with their lives. There is a second group of people that constantly aspire for more and are never satisfied no matter how much wealth they have gained. The reason for one's contentment also needs to be examined. Most likely it comes from the inability to gain more wealth, known as "alAbha prayuktam".



Daya Devi is the ultimate state of bliss above which nothing else exists

However, if the same individual was endowed with ability to gain more wealth and afforded opportunities to realize this, it is doubtful whether the disposition of contentment will come about. There is definitely a "tAratamyam" (gradation in terms of the degree of wealthiness) in this regard. For example, one may be the collector for a small village panchayat. This is definitely a position of importance. However, the collector of larger district enjoys perks and privileges of a bigger scale in comparison. Thus, the joy arising from such a position is much greater. Likewise, the head of a state and nation have increasingly greater perks, privileges, and authority leading to an increase in one's happiness. The village Panchayat chief, who exudes contentment, does so on account of the fact that he has neither the resources nor the opportunity to gain positions of increased authority. It is due to this 'alAbhaprayuktam" that the contentment comes about. The gradation or limits of happiness denoted by "tAratamyam" is expounded upon by the Vedam in the statement "saiShA(a)anandasya mImA(gam)sA bhavati yuvA syAt sAdhu yuvA(a)dhyAyakaH." This is referred to as AnandamImAmsa (a state of joy). This comes about in the context of enquiry about the ultimate state of bliss above which nothing else exists. The Vedam expounds on this fact through the statement "yuvA syAtsAdhuyuvA(a)dhyAyakaH." Everyone likes to be youthful. This is a cause for great joy. Even greater is the joy of a young one who is learned in the scriptures and is passing on this knowledge to his near and dear ones. However, if such an individual is afflicted by disease, the joy is diminished. Therefore, the Vedam declares "AshiShThaH" (one who is free from disease. This also means "sarvAn dEvAn namasyanti" namely one who has obtained the blessings of all the devas). Next the Vedam glorifies "dR^iDhiShThaH" (one who has firm resolve and is consistent in his speech and behavior). The Vedam follows this with the tribute "baliShThaH" to denote one who is strong. It is insufficient if one is endowed with all this but is poor. Therefore, the Vedam adds the qualification "tasyeyaM pR^ithivI sarvA vittasya pUrNA syAt" to denote one that has great wealth enabling him to get anything and everything on earth that he desires. Such a person's delight is described in the Vedam as "sa eko mAnuSha AnandaH" (a unit of joy). A hundred times this unit of joy denotes the joy of manuShya gandharva. A hundred times the unit of manuShya gandharva Ananda denotes one unit of deva gandharva Ananda and so forth culminating in the declaration "sa eko brahmaNa AnandaH" denoting the Supreme Bliss. Prior to this the Vedam describes "prajApaterAnandAH" corresponding to the joy experienced by one who begets the status of the four-faced Brahma. This far exceeds the joy of all others below him. This is alluded to in the salutation "atividhi" of this Daya Satakam verse.


sa eko brahmaNa AnandaH

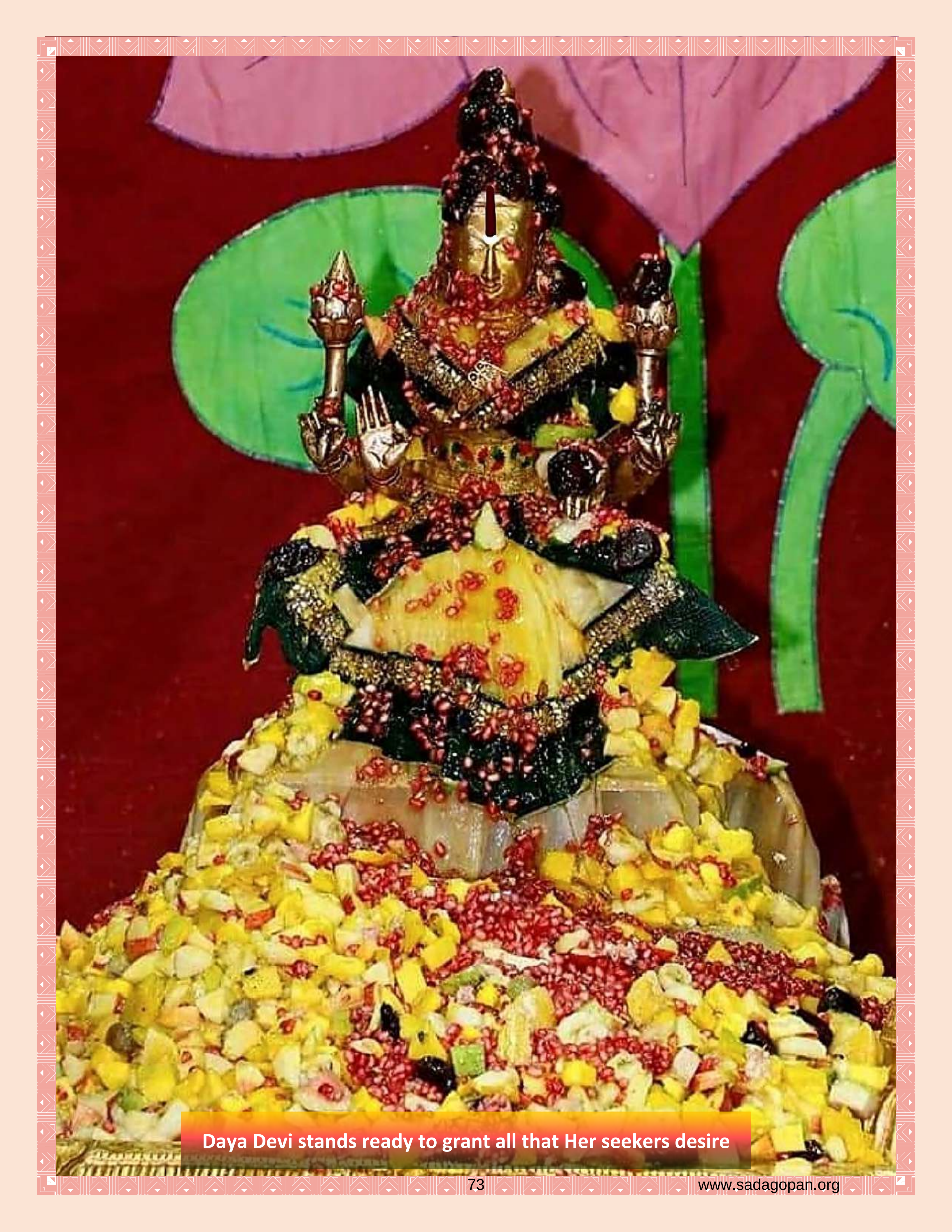
Next comes the tribute "shivaiH" from this verse. This denotes the joy of one who occupies the position of Siva, the destroyer. This is eloquently captured in Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram "pesa ninRa civanukkum piraman tanakkum piRarkkum nAyakan avanE kapAlanan mOkkatthukkaNDu kONmin teca mA matiL sUzhntazhakAya tirukkurukUr ataNuL Ican pAl Oravam paRaital ennAvitilinkiyarkkE" (It needs to be understood that the glory of Lord Narayana is beyond compare. However, for the purpose of illustrating this fact, a comparison with Siva is undertaken in this verse. The very fact that Siva is chosen in this instance lends substance to the Ananda experienced by the occupier of this position). Thus, the tribute "atividhi shivair aishvaryAtmAnubhUti rasairjanAn" from this Daya Satakam verse denotes the fact that Daya Devi confers the blessings of the joys of Brahma, Siva, and more (denoted by Kaivalyam - the ability to enjoy one's Atma) to Her seekers. The inner meaning of this tribute is that it causes one to reflect on whether the joys experienced in prakR^ita lokam measures up to the joy experienced by the occupier of the position of Brahma and Rudra. This may be possible if one's experience in their present birth corresponds exclusively to their puNya karma and is untainted by any pApa karma. In that instance, their experience of joy could be greater than that of Brahma and Rudra. How so? The positions of Brahma and Rudra are attained as a result of great penance. However, the occupier of those positions is subject to the results of their good and bad karma. If affected by bad karma, their joy becomes diminished. Thus, one 's joy as a result of their earthly existence experiencing exclusively their good karma can outweigh the joy of those blessed with the positions of Brahma and Rudra. For example, Brahma experienced the loss of the Vedams due to the Vedas being stolen by the asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha as documented in the salutation "vedApahAraka gurupAtaka daitya pIDAdi Apat vimocana". It must be remembered that the greatest wealth that Brahma possesses is that of the Vedam. When this was stolen from him, he lost his radiance and effulgence. Bereft of the Vedam, he could not perform his function of creation of the universe. This caused him great anguish. Likewise, Siva too experienced anguish due to his apacharam towards his Acharya/father, Brahma. As a consequence, he was forced to beg for alms. Thus, amidst the joys of Siva lokam, the occupier of the position of Siva is subject to travails such as this as a result of the pApa karma. The tribute "AhR^idayam iha upacChandyaiH" from this Daya Satakam verse refers to the fact that Daya Devi confers these benefits of the joys of the positions of Brahma, Rudra, and more in the manner of upachandanam.



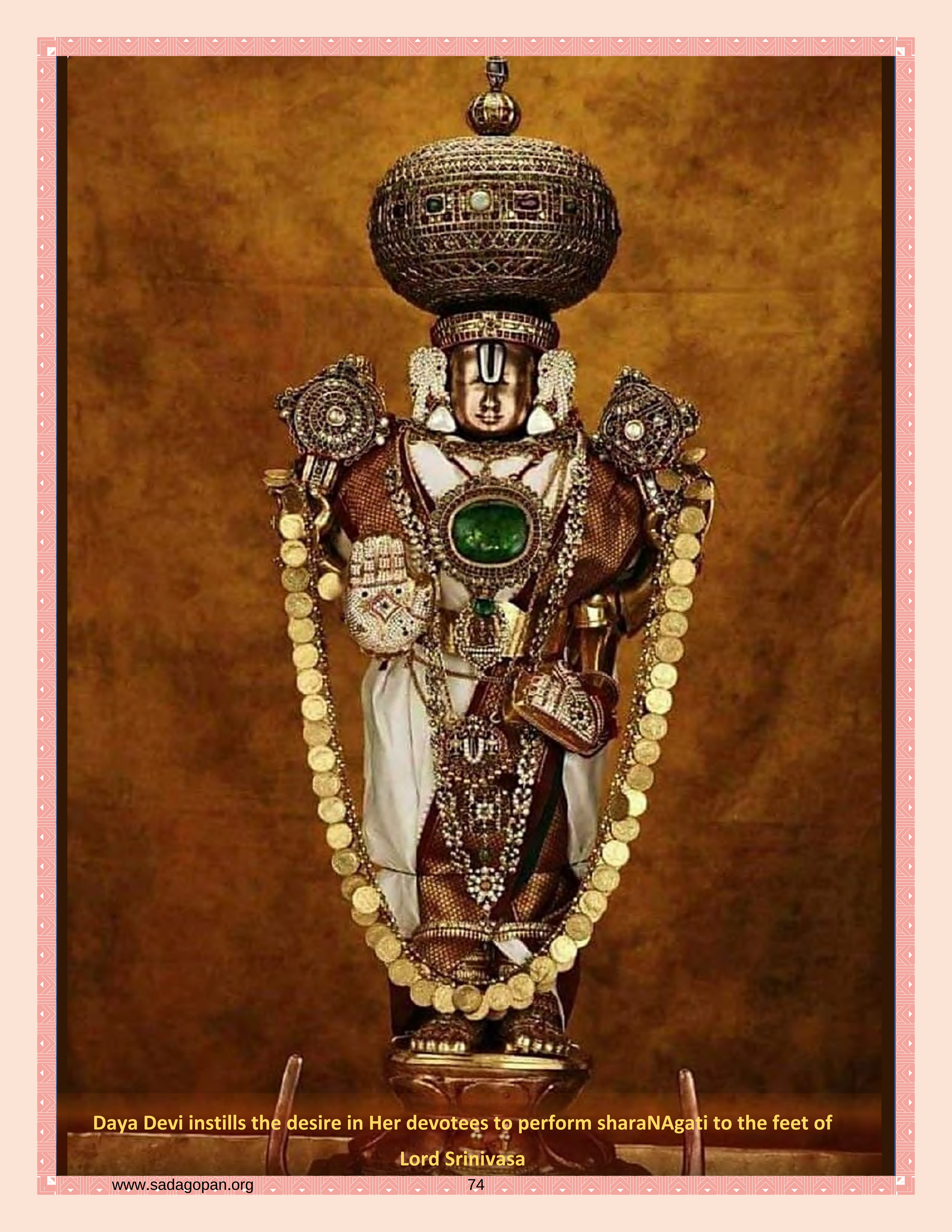
Daya Devi commands us to come to the Venkatam hill

Namely, if a child is incentivized to perform well in studies by the offer of a reward, it denotes upachandanam. Here it must be noted that the child has a greater fondness for the reward rather than the intention to excel in studies. However, the use of the reward as an incentive causes the child to take the studies seriously and perform well. Likewise, Daya Devi uses the joyous experiences from the positions of Brahma, Rudra, and more as incentive for the seeker to turn their attention towards moksham, which grants the ultimate bliss. This then leads to the question whether Daya Devi confers these rewards on Her supplicants knowing fully well that they are detrimental to their ultimate goal? Daya Devi knows very well that these joys are transient and destructible. However, She uses them as upachandanam knowing that by incentivizing Her seekers, they will eventually turn around and seek moksham.

Where does Daya Devi grant this? It is answered in the salutation "iha" denoting the Venkatam hill. The import of this tribute is that Daya Devi stands ready to grant all that Her seekers desire. However, She urges them to come to the Venkatam hill to formally make the request. Central to this requirement is Daya Devi's objective of causing Her seekers to turn towards moksham. For common men, the ultimate puruShArtham is food (annam). For the devatas, it is the offering of havis through yaj~nams. For worms and other insects, it is the intense desire to be engulfed by filth from drains. However, the sat-atmAs (pure ones) regard Bhagavad Kaimkaryam as the ultimate puruShArtham. Daya Devi's message to all these individuals is that whatever be their ultimate puruShArtha, She commands them to come to the Venkatam hill and that She would grant the request. This is Her way of inducing people to come to Her so that She can point them towards the ultimate puruShArtham of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, which may not be the goal of these seekers. One can literally count on one's fingertips those that desire moksham among the scores of Bhaktas arriving at the Venkatam hill with a plethora of requests for Lord Srinivasa. On the other hand, it is common to encounter folks that come with desires of their children getting highest distinction in their education, or desiring marriage of their children, or advancement in their chosen professional field, or seeking large amounts of wealth, or seeking freedom from diseases/illness. However, it is very hard to encounter one who desires to be associated with sat-viShayam, Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, BhAgavata Kaimkaryam, AchArya Kaimkaryam and the like for themselves, and for their near and dear.



Daya Devi stands ready to grant all that Her seekers desire

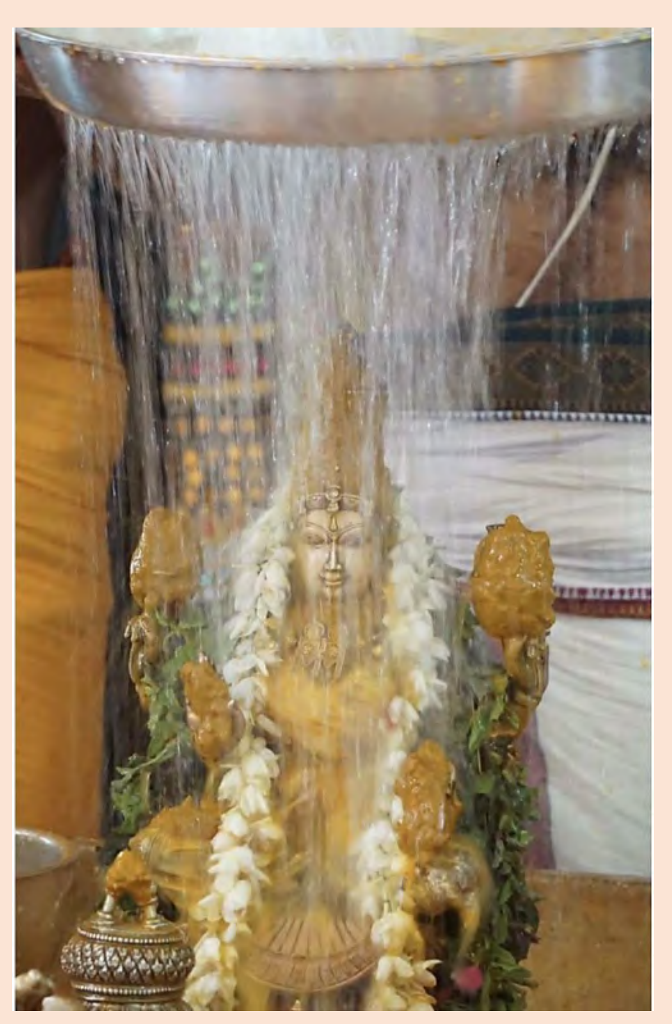


Daya Devi instills the desire in Her devotees to perform sharaNAgati to the feet of Lord Srinivasa

Thus, for people, who desire all manner of material benefits, Daya Devi instructs them to come to Tirumala, where She stands ready to grant them everything and more. Their desires are denoted by "sangam" (craving for wealth and other material objects). For these beings, Daya Devi causes "asa~Nga dashArthinI". That is Daya Devi's intent is to rid them of their desire for sangam. Specifically, Her instruction for them to come to the Venkatam hill is for the sole purpose of highlighting the fact that their desires denoted by "sangam" are transient and will be destroyed at some point of time or the other. One needs to look no further than the great kings like Manu and MAndhAta, who were ancestors of Lord Rama, to discern this fact. Daya Devi's objective is to impress upon Her seekers that their deep-rooted desires for trivial and transient benefits is inappropriate. This is captured in the salutation "tR^iShita janatA tIrtha snAna krama kShapitainasAM" of this Daya Satakam verse. This is in the manner of a thirsty man, who is ready to partake of bottled water from anyone, being offered the benefit of snAnam in the Ganga river, which not only quenches his thirst but also rids him of all of his sins. Daya Devi's modus operandi with respect to those desiring "sangam" is described through this example. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi encourages Her seekers to come to the Venkatam hill, and assures them that all their desires will be granted. Not only that, as a bonus, She causes them to realize the transient nature of these benefits and instead instructs them to resort to the Lord's feet to gain the lasting bliss of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam arising through moksham.

This is further elaborated upon in the salutation "vitarasi daye vItAta~NkA vR^iShAdri pateH padam" of this Daya Satakam verse. In accordance with the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram declaration "vinnavarum mannavarum virumbum veRpu venkaTa veRpena viLankum veda veRpE", the salutation of this Daya Satakam verse "vR^iShAdri pateH padam" denotes the Venkatam hill, which is sought after by the nitya sUris of Sri Vaikuntam as well as residents of this universe. The instruction herein from Daya Devi to all seekers is "Please come to the Venkatam hill. I shall grant everything you desire."

The tribute "vItAta~NkA vitarasi" denotes the fact that Daya Devi cleanses us and causes us to be freed from fear. The cleansing here is a reference to the destruction of one's karma causing them to crave for trivial benefits. Furthermore, once the individual has resorted to the feet of Lord Srinivasa for gaining the



vItAta~NkA vitarasi

ultimate purushArtham, there is no fear at all. They are freed from all base desires and seek only opportunities for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This also comes as a relief for Daya Devi, who then declares “My objective has been realized”.

In summary, through this verse Svami Desikan establishes the important fact that Daya Devi encourages Her seekers to come to the Venkatam hill and assures them that She will grant them everything they desire. With time, She causes them to realize that these desires for trivial and impermanent benefits is inappropriate. Instead She instills in them the desire for the lasting benefit of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, which is readily realized through sharaNAgati to the feet of Lord Srinivasa, and causes them to perform Prapatti.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“Oh Daya Devi! For those people who have been recognized by You as deserving Your guidance to the Moksha path, You design a careful elevatory project. They might be tempted by great seats of power such as Brahma and Shiva. If they begin to strive for such offices woe unto them! So also is kaivalyam, the bliss of contemplation on one’s atma. What do You do in regards to them? You inveigle them to Tirumalai. You expose the divine form of Lord Venkatesha to them. It is really a holy immersion in sacred waters so to say. They enjoy the bath physically too; it is cool, refreshing, and invigorating. The incidental consequence is that they become freed of sins. Now You can without any shame or guilt elevate them to the eternal bliss of Sri Vaikuntam.

It is important to note the use of the salutation "tR^iShita janatA tIrtha snAna krama kShapitainasAM." Thirsty people get down in a cool pond.; they then get a holy bath in the sweltering summer heat. There is a rule - if one bathes in the Ganga, one is freed from the sultriness as well as from one's sins. By application of this rule, excuse, forgiveness, and destruction of one's sins comes about due to the arrival at the Venkatam hill and by the performance of sharaNAgati to the feet of Lord Srinivasa. The point to be noted here is that one dives into the pond for obtaining relief of physical discomfort from the sweltering heat. However, not only do they gain that benefit but also as a bonus receive assurance of attaining Paramapada. Where can one get a bonus, that exceeds the routine prize by many orders of magnitude?"



Slokam 76

वृषगिरि सुधा सिन्धौ जन्तुर्दये निहितस्त्वया

भव भय परीताप च्छित्त्यै भजन्नघमर्षणम्।

मुषित कलुषो मुक्तेरग्रेसरैरभिपूर्यते

स्वयमुपनतैः स्वात्मानन्द प्रभृत्यनुबन्धिभिः ॥ ७६ ॥

vR^iShagiri sudhA sindhau jantur daye nihitastvayA

bhava bhaya pariitApacChityai bhajannaghamarShaNam|

muShita kaluSho mukteragresarairabhi pUryate

svayam upanataiH svAtmAnanda prabhR^ityanu bandhibhiH||76



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "This verse is "vR^iShagiri sudhA sindhau jantur daye nihitastvayA bhava bhaya pariitApacChityai bhajannaghamarShaNam muShita kaluSho mukteragresarairabhi pUryate svayam upanataiH svAtmAnanda prabhR^ityanu bandhibhiH". The previous verse highlighted the fact that Daya Devi grants prayojanAntharam (all that Her seekers wish for). Furthermore, She induces in them a desire to seek moksham and ensures that they beget this. In this verse, Svami Desikan highlights the upakaram of Daya Devi for Her seekers, whose sole objective is the parama puruShArtham of moksham. As is well known, it is possible to gain moksham through Prapatti in the manner of "etAt dehAvasanemAm" (at the end of earthly existence). Instead of letting them languish for the remainder of their earthly existence upon performance of Prapatti and then granting moksham, Daya Devi ensures that they are blessed with ample opportunities for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam either through bodily efforts or other means. As a result, they are also graced with other aishvaryams. The salutation "vR^iShagiri sudhA sindhau jantur daye nihitastvayA bhava bhaya pariitApacChityai bhajannaghamarShaNam" illustrates the fact that there exist two oceans - one of samsaram and the other consisting of the Divine Flow (amR^itam - the life-giving elixir so to speak) of Lord Srinivasa. The former is replete with heat arising on account of a plethora of difficulties. If one is caught up in this ocean, they will only drown and have no chance of crossing over this ocean. This ocean is also replete with fear of many kinds.


bhava bhaya pariitApacChityaiH

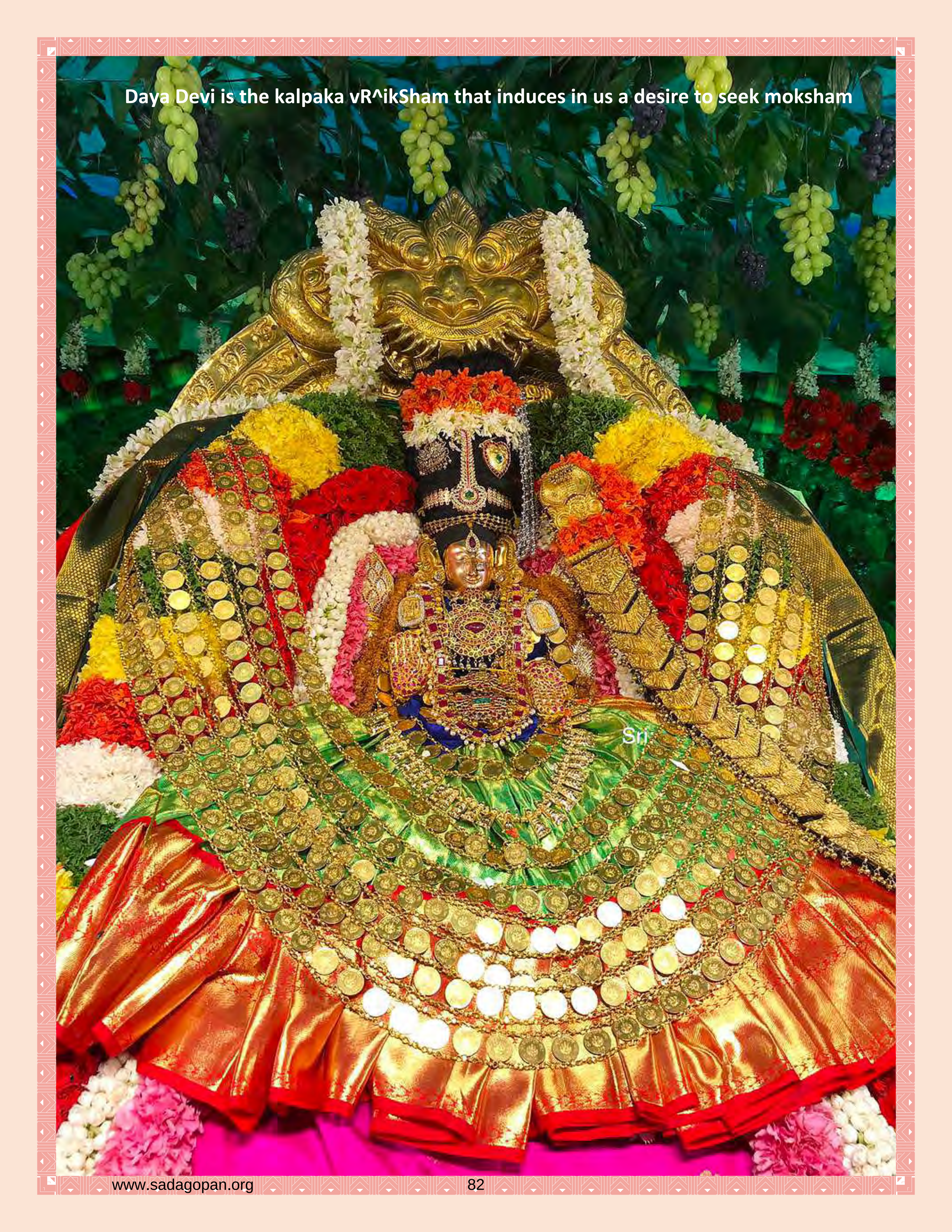
The Srinivasa ocean in one fell swoop destroys the fears as well as the heat arising from the samsara ocean as evidenced by the tribute "bhava bhaya pariitApacChityaiH". This is brought about by Daya Devi by causing the jivans who have surrendered to undertake a deep- immersion in the Srinivasa ocean. As a result, one's fears as well the heat from the samsara ocean are destroyed at once. The inner meaning is that for one unskilled in swimming, it becomes impossible to cross over the samsara ocean. Each time he tries to stay afloat, the waves of the samsara ocean cause him to be thrown deeper in the ocean, increasing his fears of drowning. This is the fear that is destroyed by contact with the Srinivasa ocean. The heat that is generated by the samsara ocean on account of the difficulties encountered therein due to adhyAtmika (caused on account of one's body), adhibhautikam (arising from fellow inhabitants of the earth like thieves for example, unexpected collapse of one's residence, or meeting with an accident when taking a walk), and Adhidaivikam (coming about from natural sources- earthquakes, wildfires, ativR^iShTi and anAvR^iShTi arising from excessive rainfall or famine for example). These have several meanings. However, in the context of this verse we shall adopt one of them. The fear arising from these three types of difficulties is also destroyed by contact with the Srinivasa ocean. The usage of "nihita" in this salutation is significant in that these beings do not voluntarily come seeking an immersion in the Srinivasa ocean. Instead Daya Devi compels them to undertake the immersion leaving them with no choice. This is very much in the manner of a concerned mother forcing a recalcitrant child to undertake an oil bath. The forced immersion into the Srinivasa ocean, which is verily the ocean of amR^itam, denoted by the "sudhA sindhau" salutation immediately destroys one's fear of drowning in the samsara ocean. Additionally, Daya Devi, by forcing the immersion in the Srinivasa ocean also causes a destruction of one's fears on account of adhyAtmika, adhibhautikam, and Adhidaivikam induced difficulties which characterize the samsara ocean. The resulting heat too caused in the samsara ocean for these beings is destroyed on account of the Daya Devi enforced immersion in the Srinivasa ocean. Next the salutation "bhajannaghamarShaNam" from this verse refers to the insurance offered by this Daya Devi enforced immersion. For example, we take out insurance to guard against natural disasters impacting our place of residence, health insurance, life insurance, automobile insurance and the like. However, these insurances do not offer guarantees against damage from various causes or ensure that these disasters will not occur. Instead, they merely mitigate the impact of the damage through monetary compensation. However, the Srinivasa Ocean offers the guarantee that one will never be impacted

by the difficulties and fears arising from the samsara ocean. Therefore, Daya Devi forces the immersion of these beings in the Sudha Sindhu of the Srinivasa ocean.



Daya Devi leads us to the immersion in the Sudha Sindhu of the Srinivasa ocean

The usage of "jantuH" in this context denotes all beings (human and animals). This is a reference to the fact that all beings (human and animals) are eligible for prapatti (sarvAdhikAram). Bhakti yogam requires one to be a tri-varNika (belonging to the Brahmana, kshatriya, or Vaishya caste) to undertake the upAsana. However, Prapatti is suitable for all regardless of caste, creed, gender, affiliation, or form. This can be adopted by anyone who does not have the wherewithal to undertake the arduous prescriptions of Bhakti yogam. All that is called for is an appeal for protection to Lord Srinivasa accompanied by an admission of one's inability to undertake the nuances of Bhakti yogam due to lack of knowledge or strength. This is denoted by the salutation "bhajannaghamarShaNam" is considered next. This means destruction of one's sins. In this context, it denotes the fact that performance of Prapatti is pApa nivR^itti (destruction of one's sins comes about on account of the act of Prapatti). A second meaning for this tribute is the performance of snAnam. One performs snAnam to rid oneself of impurities in the body.


Daya Devi is the kalpaka vR^ikSham that induces in us a desire to seek moksham
Sri

In the context of Prapatti, the snAnam ensures a destruction of impurity external as well as internal to one's body. There are several ways of performing snAnam. The most significant among them is the dharmashAstrokta snAnam. In accordance with the procedure for this snAnam one recites the aghamarShaNa sUktam while perfoming the snAnam.

A few mantrams from the aghamarShaNa sUktam **(Listen to audio here)** are discussed here: "hiraNyashR^i~Ngam varuNam prapadye tIrtham me dehi yAchitaH yanmaya bhuktamasAdhUnAm pApebhyashca parigrahaH" "yanme manasA vAca karmaNA vA duShkR^itam kR^itam tanna indro varuNo bR^ihaspatiH savitA ca punantu punaH punaH" This is a prayer submitted to VaruNa, the Lord of the waters. The implication here is that the Vedam tribute is meant for Lord Narayana, the indweller of VaruNa. The mantram starts with an appeal to VaruNa through the salutation "hiraNyashR^i~Ngam varuNam prapadye tIrtham me dehi yAchitaH" to render the water suitable for one's bath.

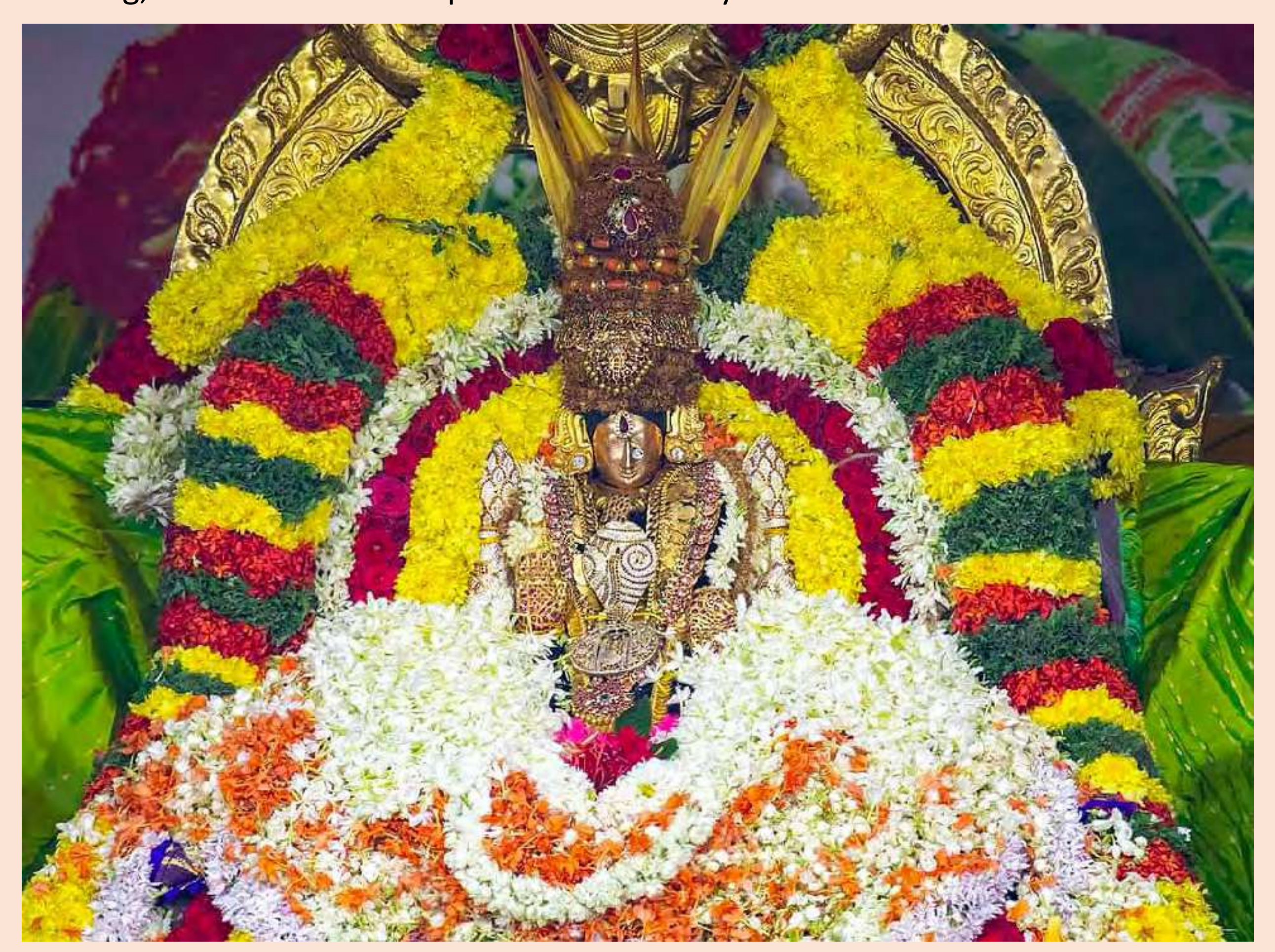
This is then followed by a prayer in the submission "yanme manasA vAca karmaNA vA duShkR^itam kR^itam" to rid one of sins arising from objects received from evil ones as well as for any sins committed through mind, body, or speech and render one pure. In a like manner freedom from a number of impurities is requested as documented in the salutations: "R^itaM ca satyaM cAbhIddhA-ttapaso(a)dhyajAyata tato rAtrirajayata tata-ssamudro arNavaH" "samudrAdarNavA dadhi samvathsaro ajAyata". These mantrams are to be rendered while performing snAnam through immersion in the water body. Performance of snAnam while reciting these mantrams rids one of sins and impurities. Due to this fact, the set of mantrams is termed as aghamarShaNa sUktam - that which destroys all blemishes. The mantrams "akAryakAryavakIrNI steno brUNahA gurutalpagaH" "varuNo (a)pamaghamarShaNa-stasmAt pApAt pramucyate" refer to VaruNa, whose indweller, Lord Narayana, is aghamarShaNan - one who destroys all kinds of sins. The shastras recommend performance of nitya snAnam through the rendition of the aghamarShaNa sUktam. Just as the aghamarShaNa sUktam accompanied immersion, or immersion in the Ganga River destroys one's sins, the Srinivasa ocean immersion too destroys one's sins. The import of the tribute "bhajannaghamarShaNam muShita kaluSho mukteragresarairabhi pUryate svayam upanataiH svAtmAnanda prabhR^ityanu bandhibhiH" from this Daya Satakam verse is that performance of sharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Srinivasa once and for all destroys one sins in the manner of the aghamarShaNa sUktam accompanied snAnam.


amR^ita sindhu

Upon ridding one of their sins, this immersion in the amR^ita sindhu of Lord Srinivasa guarantees the individual a spot in Sri Vaikuntam at the conclusion of their earthly existence in the manner of the Nyasa Dashakam salutation "etat dehAvasAnemAm tvatpAdam prApaya svayam". What then for the remainder of time of earthly existence for the jivan upon performance of Prapatti? Svami Desikan answers this by noting that Daya Devi grants the individual all kinds of happiness that awaits one prior to reaching Sri Vaikuntam during the earthly existence. That is these beings receive all aishvaryam, and kaivalyam benefits during their earthly existence prior to attaining the bliss of eternal kaimaryam in Sri Vaikuntam. It is helpful to recall here, Sri Parashara Bhattar's GuNaratna Kosham tribute "aishvaryamakShara gatim paramam padham vA" denoting the fact that Ranganayaki Thayar stands ready to grant all manner of aishvaryam, kaivalyam, and moksham benefits to one who by sheer accident submitted a prayerful appeal with hands folded in anjali posture. In a like manner, Daya Devi having assured us of a spot in Sri Vaikuntam makes available all kinds of opportunities for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam during our earthly existence after Prapatti thus giving us a sneak preview of the great treasure that awaits us in Sri Vaikuntam. In the SharaNAgati DIpika tribute "divye pade niyata ki~NkaratAdhirAjyaM dAtuM tvadIya dayayA vihitAbhiShekAH AdehapAtAmanaghAH paricaryayA te yunjAnacintya yuvaraja padam bhajanti". Svami Desikan declares that "those who have performed sharaNAgati at the feet of their AcArya, have been coronated as crown princes in the vast kingdom of ceaseless kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana in Sri Vaikuntam due to Your Daya, Oh DIpa PrakAsha!" The coronation as a crown prince formally telegraphs the intent that the individual is in line for acquiring the kingdom. The attainment of the kingdom occurs upon reaching Sri Vaikuntam at the end of one's earthly existence. In the interim period after performance of sharaNAgati, the individual serves as a crown prince, who partakes of the anubhavam of blemish-free kaimkaryam to Lord DIpa PrakAshar. This comes about on account of Daya Devi due to the performance of sharaNAgati.

The same message is conveyed in this Daya Satakam verse through the "bhajannaghamarShaNam" tribute. As a consequence, Daya Devi ensures that one gets a sneak preview of the bountiful treasure that awaits us in Sri Vaikuntam in the form of numerous blemish-free Bhagavad Kaimkaryam opportunities. Additionally, the pleasures of aishvaryam and kaivalyam that precede moksham are granted to these individuals by Daya Devi. All this comes about as a natural consequence of one's sharaNAgati. In fact, these aishvaryam and kaivalyam pleasures seek refuge in the sharaNAgata and cause him to render blemishless

kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana during the remainder of his earthly existence in addition to ridding him once and for all from the fears and heat of the samsara ocean. Thus, with a prayerful offering to the Srinivasa ocean to rid us of the heat and fear of samsara, while rendering us pure in the manner of the aghamarShaNa snAnam aDiyEn seeks the blessing of being anointed as a crown prince due to the performance of sharaNAgati at the feet of AcAryas and enable us to engage in blemish-free kaimkaryam during the remainder of our earthly existence. With this offering, we conclude the exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."



The pleasures of aishvaryam and kaivalyam that precede moksham are granted to us by Daya Devi.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin: "Oh Daya Devi! You have transported this creature to the bliss of a bath in the cool pond of nectar called Sri Venkatesa. This immersion is not only cool, relieving, but also rejuvenating and re-generating for one who has suffered fear and sultriness in this hot summer of samsara. There is a hymn known as aghamarShaNa sUktam in the Vedas, prescribed for chanting before a bath, in order to ward off all sins.



The cool pond for rejuvenating and re-generating us from the sufferings of samsara

Could I then call this bliss of witnessing the personage of Sri Venkatesa as equivalent to an ashamarShaNa bath! Yes. The Darshan of Sri Venkatesa is so potent.; it confers on one the honor of an aghamarShaNa-preceded bath, a ritual that removes sins and makes one pure, orthodox, pollution-free, and sin-free. The equivalence of the darshan of Sri Venkatesa to prapadana ritual is also suggested. What aghamarShaNa sUktam accompanying a ceremonious bath secures for one, Prapatti also does.

The reward is the person's relief from all sins. Not only that, Daya Devi presumably compares his sadhana with anyone's achievement in the spiritual path. She says to Herself: "This being has had an aghamarShaNa snAna. He is a Prapanna. On that very score, he is eligible for Moksham. I cannot equate him with anyone who takes a ritualized bath. He is a Prapanna; He has enjoyed a sanctifying bath in the holy pond called Sri Venkatesa. Even if I grant him additional boon of SvAtmAnubhava, I would still not have done the due. Hence let him enjoy kaivalya first and then go to the ultimate bliss of Parama Padam".



Slokam 77

अनितर जुषामन्तर्मूलेऽप्यपाय परिप्लवे

कृतविदनघा विच्छिद्यैषां कृपे यम वश्यताम्।

प्रपदन फल प्रत्यादेश प्रसङ्ग विवर्जितं

प्रतिविधिमुपाधत्से सार्धं वृषाद्रि हितैषिणा ॥ ७७ ॥

anitara juShAmantarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave

kR^itavidanaghA vicChidyaiShAM kR^ipe yama vashyatAm|

prapadana phala pratyAdesha prasa~Nga vivarjitaM

pratividhimupadhatse sArdhaM vR^iShAdri hitaiShiNA||77



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin: "We are enjoying the glory of Daya Devi as described by Svami Desikan in this decad. The seventy seventh verse is "anitara juShAmantarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave kR^itavidanaghA vicChidyaiShAM kR^ipe yama vashyatAm prapadana phala pratyAdesha prasa~Nga vivarjitaM pratividhimupadhatse sArdhaM vR^iShAdri hitaiShiNA". The previous verse described the role of Daya Devi in forcing jivans to undertake an immersion in the nectarine ocean of elixir known as Lord Srinivasa. As a consequence of this immersion, the sins committed by the jivan are destroyed. Not only that, due to the forced immersion, Daya Devi guarantees moksham for the jivan. Prior to granting moksham, Daya Devi also ensures that the jivan is blessed with anuSha~Ngika phalan (benefit of residence in Svarga lokam) in keeping with the Vedam (Taittiriya Brahmanam) tribute "AshAste(a)yaM yajamano(a)sau ayurAshAste suprajAstvamAshAste sajAthvanamAshAste uttarAM devayajyAmAshAste". This Vedam salutation highlights the yaj~nams that one needs to perform in order to gain residence in svarga lokam. Svarga lokam is gained upon the end of one's earthly existence. Would one then undergo suffering until the end of their earthly existence and then gain the benefit of Svarga vAsam? Svami Desikan answers this with a firm negative. In keeping with the Vedam declaration referenced herein, Svami Desikan states that the performance of Prapatti ensures that the yajamAnan (performer of Prapatti) is blessed with long life, good children, and the ability to perform great yagas to gain Svarga vAsam.


Sri:



Quite often we encounter sale advertisements of buy one get one free. In a like manner, while performance of Prapatti guarantees one of the ultimate PurushArtham of moksham, other purushArthas (ayurArogyamaishvaryam, kaivalyam) too come about as a by-product. This verse addresses the questions of sins knowingly committed after performance of Prapatti. Specifically, if one knowingly commits sins, upon performance of Prapatti, one has to necessarily endure light punishment during one's lifetime. The question that arises is whether these sins could be an obstacle to gaining moksham. Svami Desikan answers the question in this verse by noting that the grace of Daya Devi ensures that these sins will not be an obstacle for one's moksham. When one surrenders to Lord Srinivasa, He grants us boons in the manner of the declaration "abhilashita durApa ye purA kAma bhogAH jaladhinivajalaughAH shevishanti svayam naH"(Lord Srinivasa automatically grants all unfulfilled but sought after bhogams (luxuries), in the manner of ocean waves joining the ocean waters). Thus, all that one desires is granted as a by-product of one's sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa. In this verse, Svami Desikan asserts that not only do we gain these fruits as a result of sharaNAgati but also we are freed from all kinds of fear. Specifically, one that has performed sharaNAgati, will not be subject to the vice-like grip of Yama, which necessarily comes about otherwise to those who have sinned. Due to prarabdha karma, one is engaged in countless sinful acts. After performance of Prapatti, the prarabdha karma pertaining to the individual for the remainder of their earthly existence can cause them to engage in sinful acts. Would these in any way be impediments to one's moksham is the question answered in this verse. Svami Desikan unambiguously states that the grace of Daya Devi ensures that these sins would not constitute barriers for one's moksham. The salutation "anitara juShAmantarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave kR^itavidanaghA vicChidyaiShAM kR^ipe yama vashyatAm" opens with the sambodhanam "kR^ipe" (Oh Daya Devi! You have come to our rescue in a plethora of ways and rendered numerous upakarams). The tribute "anitarajuShAm" refers to those beings who seek refuge in Lord Narayana alone to the exclusion of all other deities. These beings only desire the parama purushArtham of uninterrupted Bhagavad Kaimkaryam and spurn all other prayojanAntara phalan (material benefits). Tirumazhisai Azhvar acquired fame for unambiguously establishing the Para Tattvam (Supremacy of Lord Narayana). The Azhvar's works of nAnmukhan tiruvantAti and Tirucchanta Viruttham document this in a lucid manner leaving no room for doubt. Usually, the nAnmukhan tiruvantAti is rendered during specific utsavam days at Divya Desams, when Lord Narayana is in Sesha VAhanam (serpent bed of AdisheSha) in the Paramapada

nAthan tirukkolam (posture as the Lord of Parama Padam). This is meant to illustrate the fact that the Lord of the Divya Desam is no different from Lord Narayana in Sri Vaikuntam. This nAnga utsavam is meant solely for highlighting the supremacy of Lord Narayana. The specific pasuram rendered during this occasion is "tiRampElmin kaNDIr tiruvaDi tan nAmam maRantum puRam tozhA mAntar iRainciyum cAtuvarAip pOtuminkaL enRAn namanum tan tUtuvaraik kUvi cevikku" (Yama instructs his messengers to be extremely careful while dealing with one who considers the name of Lord Narayana as the supreme purushArtham, and has no trace of association with any other deity. Yama further instructs his messengers that if they encounter such a person, they must offer respectful prostrations and seek the blessings of this person). The inner meaning is that one who is a Vaishnava considers himself subservient to Lord Narayana alone and to no other deity. Not only is he subservient to Lord Narayana but also to Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana. In fact, the ultimate form of Kaimkaryam is that rendered to Lord Narayana's Bhagavatas. For example, Lakshmana distinguished himself through exemplary Kaimkaraym to Lord Rama and thus was seshan. Bharata was a Bhagavata who subjected himself completely to the will of Lord Rama (Paratantryan). Shatrughna rendered Kaimkaryam to Bharata alone (Bhagavata Kaimkaryam), which trumped everything else. Thus, his glory was even greater than that of Lakshmana. This is captured in the Valmiki Ramayanam salutation "shatR^ighno nitya shatR^ighnaH" denoting the fact that Shatrughna had no enemies. The inner meaning is that he was bereft of all ahankaram and mamakaram - rid of the sense of I and My - which are the enemies that regularly take hold of common beings. This exemplifies VaishNavatam. This message is embedded in the Pasuram of the Azhvar as well. Not only that, the Azhvar instructs us that one should have no misconceptions about the supreme being. Specifically, he forbids the glorification of other deities besides Lord Narayana, as the supreme being. In this context an important question arises. Shiva as Ahibudhnyan was a great Bhagavata. Svami Desikan in the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram salutes him as "sarvaj~nanAna Rudranum". Is Rudran not aware of who the supreme being is? In fact in the MantrarAjapada stotram salutation "dAsabhUtAH svatassarve hyAtmAnaH paramAtmanaH ato(a)hamapi te dAsaH iti matvA namAmyaham" Ahirbudhnyan declares that all beings in the universe are servants of Bhagavan Nrusimha. In a like manner he too is subservient to Bhagavan Nrusimha and offers respectful salutation. Then is it wrong to engage in worship of Shiva as the parama Bhagavata? First, it is absolutely unacceptable to engage in belittling Shiva. The reason for avoiding worship of Shiva, is to remove all confusion about who is the supreme being.



"maRantum puRam tozha mAntar"
SvAmi Desikan – Mulavar and Utsavar - Tirukkacchi

This is the import of the Azhvar's tribute "maRantum puRam tozha mAntar". The instruction from the Azhvar's tribute further forbids association with those who regard anyone besides Lord Narayana as the supreme being. The exhortation of Yama to his messengers is that if they encounter an individual who regards Lord Narayana as the supreme being and has no trace of association with any other deity, such a person must be respectfully saluted and prostration at his feet must be performed. Yama also instructs his messengers not to exhibit their ruthlessly

cruel disposition in the presence of such a Vaishnava and instead adopt an extremely sAtvic disposition towards such an individual.)"

The instruction of the Azhvar is also echoed in the VishNu puranam salutation "vadati yamaH kila tasya karNamUle parihara madhusUdanaM prapannAn prabhurahamasmi nR^iNAM na vaiShNavAnAm". Meaning: "I am recognized as Yama the Lord of death. Everybody lives in the knowledge that they cannot escape my noose. Therefore, I am Prabhu (Lord) for these beings. However, for those who have performed sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana, I am not Prabhu. Understand this instruction carefully." Normally one does not admit to one's deficiencies in the open. In keeping with this dictum, Yama whispers in the ears of his attendants, his lack of Lordship over sharaNAgatas. In this Daya Satakam verse the tribute "anitara juShAm" refers to those who regard Lord Narayana alone as the supreme being and have no trace of association with other deities. Furthermore, their singular desire is that of uninterrupted Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. For such beings the grace of Daya Devi ensures that any sins accrued upon performance of sharaNAgati are wiped out in keeping with the salutation "antarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave". For example, let's say one performs sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana. Subsequently, they knowingly engage in a sinful act. This causes apAyam (contact with sins). In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of this, one first needs to comprehend the essential nature of sins. Only then can one appreciate the difference between sins committed knowingly and unknowingly. The prakAram of sins is of three kinds. The first of them refers to the sins committed prior to the performance of SharaNAgati. Post-Prapatti sins are of two kinds - those committed unknowingly and those committed knowingly. This is in addition to the prevailing prArabdha karma related sins that have begun yielding consequences. The first category is known as sancita pApam, pertaining to sins committed prior to the performance of SharaNAgati. These sins have been accumulated over innumerable births spanning several aeons of time. It is impossible to predict when a certain kind of sin committed would yield consequences. Some sins may yield consequences immediately while for some others the consequences bear out after a certain time period. For example, if one undertakes an act that accrues great puNyam, the results will be immediate. Similarly committing grave sins also yields immediate consequences. However, other puNyams and pApams have a certain order for their consequences to become evident. These types of karma are known as sancita karma. The sancita karma is wiped out by the performance of Bhakti yogam or prapatti. The second kind of sins pertains to the karma that is instrumental for the individual's current

birth. It is the karma that has begun yielding fruit. This is known as prArabdha karma.



antarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave

During the performance of prapatti, moksham is sought at the end of the current birth (dehAvasAnam). The agreement therefore is to endure the prevailing prarabdha karma until the end of one's life. This is known as abhyupagata prArabdha karma. Performance of Prapatti destroys all karma except the abhyupagata prArabdha karma. The next category of sins pertains to those accrued after the performance of Prapatti. These are of two kinds - those committed

unknowingly (abuddhipUrvakam) and those committed knowingly (buddhipUrvakam). Examples of the first kind would be the accidental destruction of insects when cleaning our homes, or accidental destruction of pests when cutting vegetables, or accidentally trampling upon insects when walking. These are sins committed unknowingly. These sins do not result in any consequences for the sharaNAgata since they came about due to sheer accident. Next the category of sins committed knowingly is addressed. These come about due to karma vAsanas that prevail even after the performance of Prapatti. This is akin to a spinning fan, which does not come to a stop immediately after the switch is turned off. For those who are uttama adhikAris (those having a comprehensive knowledge of the svarUpam of Prapatti and the nuances underlying its practice), sins of this kind do not accrue at all. However, for others it is likely that sins can be committed in this manner. Even if this arises in accordance with the declaration "anitara juShAmantarmUle(a)pyapAya pariplave" from this verse, Daya Devi ensures that it does not become an impediment for their moksham as evidenced by the statement "anagha kR^it" from this verse. Namely, Daya Devi remembers that the individual has performed sharaNAgati. If one observes Lord RanganAtha, He is seen bearing the abhaya hastam. This is indicative of the fact that He need not be repeatedly reminded that the individual has performed Prapatti. Lord RanganAtha remembers this in accordance with the tribute from SvAmi Desikan's AbhayapradAna sAram "prAyaH prapadane puMsAM paunaH puNya nivArayan". In fact, this posture suggests that it is sufficient to perform Prapatti once. The act needs no repetition. Likewise, Daya Devi too recognizes that the individual has performed sharaNAgati. Even if the individual engages in buddhipUrvaka pApam upon performance of sharaNAgati, Daya Devi ensures that the sharaNAgati performed for moksham is not nullified. Instead, the blemishless Daya Devi, saluted as "anagha" in this verse, comes to their rescue. It must be noted that Daya Devi is superior to Lord Srinivasa in one respect. When Lord Srinivasa beholds an individual, He sees both the guNam and dosham in the individual. He then metes out consequences in accordance with their guNam and doSham. However, Daya Devi only sees their guNams and turns a blind eye to their doShams. The word nigraham does not exist in Her dictionary- recall the YatirAja Saptati tribute "anugR^ihamayIM vande nityaM aj~nAta nigrahAm!" This is the reason for Daya Devi's glorification as "anagha" in this verse. Her compassion for sharaNAgatas who may engage in buddhipUrvaka pApam becomes apparent in the tribute "yama vashyatAm vicChidya" of this verse. This is indicative of the fact that Daya Devi ensures that these beings are freed from the clutches of Yama even though they engage in buddhipUrvaka pApam.


"anaghaH"





The usage of words is also instructive. In the RAmAyaNam, HanumAn's first words to Lord Rama upon his return from Lanka are "dR^iShTA sIta" indicative of the fact that Lord Rama was anxious to hear about the sighting of Sita and therefore, Hanuman's first word set Lord Rama at ease at once. This is also reflected in the Kamba RAmAyaNam tribute "kaNDEn sItaiyai". Svami Desikan treads in the path revealed by Valmiki Bhagavan through the usage "vicChidyaiShAM kR^ipe yama vashyatAm". This is meant to assure sharaNAgatas who may agonize over the fact that their sins committed knowingly could come in the way of their moksham. In one fell swoop Svami Desikan assures sharaNAgatas that their buddhipUrvaka papam is no impediment to their moksham courtesy Daya Devi. Thus, the usage of "vicChidya" for sharaNAgatas, freeing them from the clutches of Yama is in the same manner of Hanuman's assurance to Lord Rama of sighting Sita. This raises a question whether such sins can be wiped out as a result of undertaking Bhakti Yogam. Svami Desikan illustrates the essential difference between Bhakti yogam and Prapatti through this verse. Specifically, the salutation "prapadana phala pratyAdesha prasa~Nga vivarjitaM" from this Daya Satakam verse reflects this point in keeping with the Vedam declaration "na khalu bhAgavata yama vishayaM gacChanti" (Bhagavatas of Lord Narayana will never be subjects of Yama). This is also reflected in Svami Desikan's AbhIti sthavam tribute "na tasya yama vashyata naraka pAtabhItiH kutaH" This assures sharaNAgatas that they will never become subjects of interest to Yama. When this is the case, the question of enduring narakam for their sins becomes a moot point. Thus, this benefit accrues exclusively to Prapannas and is not a consequence of vidhya mAhatmyam arising from Bhakti Yogam. The tribute "prapadana phala pratyAdesha prasa~Nga vivarjitaM" is reflective of Lord Srinivasa's contemplation "This individual has performed

sharaNAgati. However, he continues to engage in buddhipUrvaka pApam. How then can he be redeemed?" Discerning this trace of hesitation on the part of Lord Srinivasa, Daya Devi, intervenes and renders the ground fertile for the individual's moksham by removing any reservations that Lord Srinivasa may have. It is important to note the difference between Bhakti yogam and Prapatti. For sharaNAgatas, there is a prarabdha khaNDam pertaining to their prarabdha karma. For example, one may have sinned and as a result may be required to endure three births in human form. However, due to some good act, if in the first birth itself he resorts to Prapatti, the prarabdha karma pertaining to that birth alone prevails until the end of that life after which the individual begets moksham. The prarabdha karma pertaining to the remaining two births is wiped out at the time of performance of Prapatti. However, a Bhakti yogam practitioner is necessarily required to endure the consequences of all prarabdha karma and only when a zero balance of karma prevails does he gain moksham. Elevated individuals like Vidura are practitioners of Bhakti yogam. Even though he has been practicing upAsanam of Bhakti Yogam for several births, due to some prarabdha karma, he was born in the shudra clan. Dharma vyAdha is another similar example. This is the essential difference between Bhakti yogam and Prapatti. The practitioner of the former is required to endure the consequences of all prarabdha karma until there is a zero balance. Whereas for a Prapanna, only the prarabdha karma pertaining to their present birth needs to be endured. Daya Devi along with Lord Srinivasa, who only has the well-being of sharaNAgatas in mind as evidenced by the salutation "vR^iShAdri hitaiShiNAM sArdhaM" of this verse, come to a consensus that even the engaging of buddhipUrvaka papam should not come in the way of moksham for the Prapanna. How then does this come about? The answer is contained in the tribute "pratividhim" of this Daya Satakam verse. Namely, if the sharaNAgata is of mR^idu (soft-hearted) nature, Daya Devi ensures that he engages in PrAyashcitta Prapatti to wipe out the consequences of post-sharaNAgati buddhipUrvaka pApam. On the other hand, if the sharaNAgata is of kaTiNa (hard hearted) nature, laghu daNDanai (light punishment) is administered to endure the consequences of buddhipUrvaka pApam. This takes place during the lifetime of the sharaNAgata and thus wipes out the consequences of such pApam. The tribute "sArdhaM" (sAyukte apradAnasya) reflects the importance of Daya Devi in this context. Specifically, Her role in suggesting "pratividhi" as a means to wipe out the consequences of buddhipUrvaka papam committed after Prapatti, arising from Her discussion with Lord Srinivasa meant for our well-being is highlighted in this verse of the Daya Satakam."





EmperumAn and SrI Daya Devi discuss the best remedies to be adopted by erring jIvans to attain Moksham

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Consider the case of devotees who forsake all other deities for worship and other paths as well, never having any ambition except Your service (anitara juShAm). With respect to transgressions incurred by them consciously, You cannot naturally dismiss them since they are done knowingly. However, You sympathize with them since they have acquired the qualification of Prapannas. You would shudder at the thought of them going to hell. You would ask "How can I allow this to happen?" You perhaps confer with the Lord. He is glorified as one who is only intent on the well-being of His devotees. Perhaps with His concurrence, You prescribe and motivate the Prapanna to adopt an appropriate expiation ritual (Prayashcittam) - indeed even a Prayashcitta Prapatti as a kind of ParihAram for

sins committed knowingly. This removes all obstacles for his moksham. This pariharam could even be a repeat Prapatti as an extreme remedy for an extreme violation.

Note that this is a consistent picture. If transgressions are done knowingly, one has to suffer the consequences when alive. Otherwise, these sins become unexpended karma. It is for the elimination of this possibility that a second Prapatti is recommended as a last resort."



Slokam 78

क्षणविलयिनां शास्त्रार्थानां फलाय निवेशिते

सुरपितृगणे निर्वेशात् प्रागपि प्रलयं गते ।

अधिगत वृषक्ष्माभृन्नाथामकाल वशंवदां

प्रतिभुवमिह व्याचख्युस्त्वां कृपे निरुपप्लवाम् ॥ ७८ ॥

kShaNa vilayinAM shAstra arthAnAM phalAya niveshite

surapitR^igaNe nirveshAt prAgapi pralayaM gate|

adhigata vR^iShakShmAbhR^innAthAmakAla vashaMvadAM

pratibhuvamiha vyAchakhyustvAM kR^ipe nirupaplavAm ||78

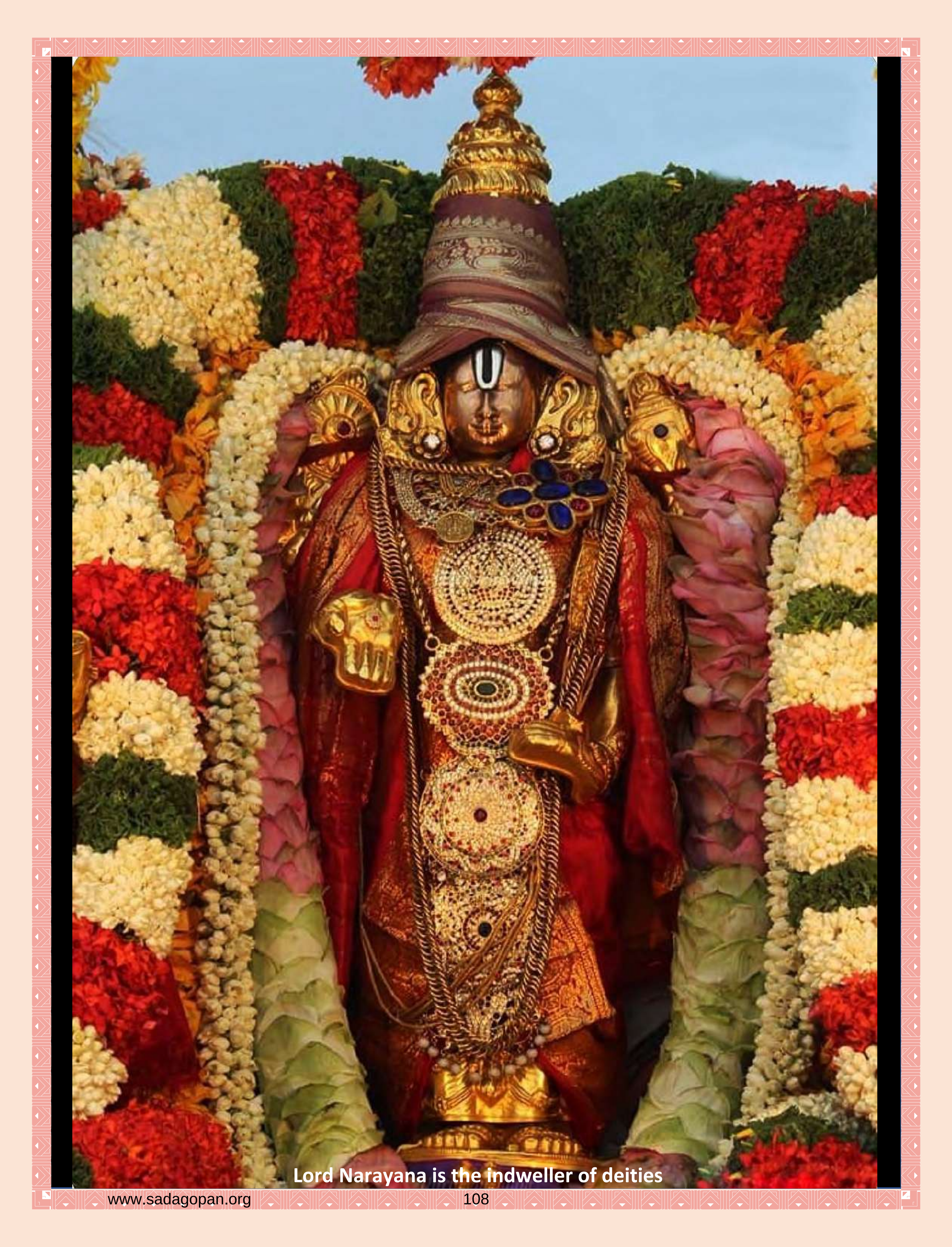


We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachariar Svamin: "This verse is "kShaNa vilayinAM shAstrArthAnAM phalAya niveshite surapitR^igaNe nirveshAt prAgapi pralayaM gate adhigata vR^iShakShmAbhR^innAthAmakAla vashaMvadAM pratibhuvamiha vyAchakhyustvAM kR^ipe nirupaplavAm". Here Svami Desikan alludes to the results arising from nitya and naimittika anushtana karmas. The fruits for these karmas are granted by various deities. Now even these deities are not permanent occupants of their respective positions. Since these deities are very much part of Prakruti mandalam, they are subject to constant change. In that case an important question that arises is: If these deities too are destructible, who would then grant the benefits underlying the nitya and naimittika karma? This becomes all the more relevant, since it is impossible to identify when one's karma begins to yield fruit. It could be in one's lifetime or in subsequent births without being able to determine the exact time. Thus, if one undertakes a karma with a specific objective, what happens if the deity that grants that objective ceases to exist? Who would then be responsible for granting the benefit? This is definitely a laukika dR^iShTAntam (common world held perspective). For example, one may be engaged in a line of work. If he is approached with a request to help in a matter pertaining to his work, he may even be kindly inclined to do so when the matter arrives within his purview. However, before this occurrence, if he ends up leaving the job, all efforts in approaching him for help becomes a wasted exercise.



Likewise, if the deities who accept offerings of nitya and naimittika karma and dispense appropriate rewards cease to exist, who would grant the appropriate rewards? Would this not then be a wasted exercise in the same vein described herein? Svami Desikan addresses this issue in the present verse. One is required to undertake deva karyams and pitru karyams in keeping with shastraic injunctions. Pitru karyam becomes quite important. The common perception is that Pitru karyams are considered inauspicious happenings. However, a close examination of the mantrams underlying their practice reveals that these karyams are intended to invoke the blessings of Pitrus for the well-being of the performer and their progeny. The salutation that describes the Deva karyams is "devatodeshena havis samarpaNam" Thus, when one undertakes yagams for these devatas, these devatas dispense the appropriate fruits. Here is where the Mimasa position needs to be considered. Specifically, they aver that the consequences for a prescribed act should be immediately, akin to turning on a light fixture by flipping a switch. Namely, if karaNam (act) prevails, kAryam (consequence) has to follow immediately. Going by this logic, when one undertakes a yagam to attain svarga vAsam, the benefit does not accrue immediately upon the performance of the yagam. Instead, it comes about only after the end of one's earthly existence. The statement "apUrva dvAra" refers to the fact that these yagams are the reason for securing svarga vAsam. However, the actual svarga vAsam comes about only after the end of one's earthly existence. These yagams become the sadhanam for attaining the benefit. This is the considered position of mimamsakas.

However, the position of the Srivaishnava Sampradayam is that the performance of yagams pleases Lord Narayana. As a result, one begets the elevated boons of residence in svargam and the like. It must be understood that acts undertaken to incur the pleasure of Lord Narayana are puNyams, while those that incur His displeasure denote pApams. When it comes to other deities, "devatodeshena havis samarpaNam" denotes the fact that these deities confer benefits on account of the status accorded to them by Lord Narayana. It must also be borne in mind that Lord Narayana, as their in-dweller, is responsible for granting these benefits. This is captured in the SrImad Bhagavad Gita statement "yo yo yAM yAM tanuM bhaktaH shraddhayAarcitumicChati tasya tasyAcalAM shraddhAM tAmeva vidadhAmyaham" and the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "avaravar tamatamatu aRivaRi vakaivakai avaravar iRaiyavar ena aDi aDaivarkaL avaravar iRaiyavar kuRaivilar iRaiyavar avaravar vitivazhi aDaiya ninRanarE". The import of these salutations is that Lord Narayana, who is the indweller of deities sought after by their followers, confers the boons desired by them.



Lord Narayana is the indweller of deities


akAla vashaMvadAM

As a consequence, Lord Narayana has established a well-known hierarchy with respect to deities and their ability to grant specifically sought benefits. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the reference is to benefits, which can be destroyed in a moment, for which course of action is prescribed in the shastras as outlined in the salutation "kShaNa vilayinAM shAstrArthAnAM phalAya niveshite". The next salutation "surapitR^igaNe nirveshAt prAgapipralayaMgate" from this Daya Satakam verse establishes that an array of devas and pitrus are lined up by Lord Narayana as the grantors of these benefits. For example, a yagam performed for Vayu Devata as attested by the Vedam Rk "vAyavyabhi shvetamalabhetabhUtikAmaH" results in Vayu granting the benefit of a gentle soothing breeze that is refreshing. The position of Vayu is occupied by a certain being. What if his time in that position ends before he can grant the benefit for one who has undertaken the yagam for Vayu?

This is answered in this Daya Satakam verse through the salutation "adhigata vR^iShakShmAbhR^innAthAmakAla vashaMvadAM". This tribute highlights the fact that Daya Devi, who has sought refuge in Lord Srinivasa as His Consort, is not subject to any limitations of space or time and hence is in existence at all times. This is highlighted in the salutation "akAla vashaMvadAM". Thus, She assures the followers of these sura pitru gaNas that even if their deity of choice, who is devoutly worshipped, ceases to exist, Daya Devi stands in their stead and confers the benefit that needs to come about to their followers. This is akin to being a guarantor for debt. In this instance since the deities have been worshipped through appropriate yagams and received the havis, they incur a debt to the worshippers. Thus, they become obligated to grant the desired benefit to their worshippers. However, if their end comes about before this debt can be discharged, Daya Devi stands in their place as a guarantor to relieve these devatas of this burden of debt. Here it must be noted that the granting of the sought benefit does not come about immediately. Instead, it is realized at an appropriate/prescribed time. In the event that the worshipped deity ceases to exist before that time, they would incur an undischarged debt to their followers. Not only that their followers now gain the stature of those who have given something to these devatas that has not been reciprocated in kind. Thus, it remains an incomplete transaction. Lord Krishna declares in the Mahabharata "ruNam pravruddhAmivame manye". This is in response to Draupadi's appeal of "shankhacakragadhApANe dvArakA nilayAcyuta". The import of Lord Krishna's statement is that He considers Himself to be indebted to Draupadi due to her sharaNagati in her appeal for protection. Specifically, Lord Krishna states that He has only responded by saving Draupadi from disgrace in the

royal court due to the Govinda nAmam. However, in her appeal, Draupadi submitted several more nAmams, for which she has not been suitably compensated. This is in the manner of debt that is constantly accruing interest. With regard to deities saluted in the nitya and naimittika karmas, they incur a debt due to accepting the havis and the like from yagams. If they do not grant the boons as a result of this offering, it remains an unrealized debt. This would then cause the performers to ask whether they should even undertake the performance of these rituals since the benefits underlying their performance are not guaranteed.

Therefore, Svami Desikan highlights the important role of Daya Devi, who is present at all times without any exceptions, as the guarantor for these potentially undischarged debts. This is reflected in the salutation "pratibhuvamiha vyAchakhyustvAM kR^ipe nirupaplavAm" of this Daya Satakam verse. The implication here is that those well versed in the Shastras, recognize Daya Devi to be the guarantor for undischarged debts of devatas and pitrus, who receive offerings of havis and tarpaNam through yagams. Thus, it is unequivocally established that the one who grants the benefits for nitya and naimittika karmas is undoubtedly Daya Devi. Just as Lord Narayana exists at all times as evidenced by the Vishnu sahasranamam tribute "sadaikarUparUpAya" (namely one who is unaffected by Karma and is therefore not subject to change of any kind), Daya Devi too exists at all times. This is the import of this Daya Satakam verse. This verse emphasizes the important point pertaining to the difference in the cause for the Lord's avataram and that for our birth. The former is controlled entirely by the Lord's sankalpam, which causes Him to undertake numerous avatarams. The latter is governed solely by one's karma.

Thus, His avatarams and leelas are entirely due to His sankalpam. However, all changes that come about to us are strictly functions of our own karma. Daya Devi also is present at all times just like Lord Narayana. She too is unaffected by karma. Therefore, She functions as the guarantor for all undischarged debts incurred by devatas, who are endowed with the powers of granting specific benefits to their followers. "phalam upapattateH" is the SriBhashyam tribute that highlights the fact that Lord Narayana is the grantor of all boons sought from various deities. Svami Bhashyakarar establishes this fact through numerous pramaNas (valid sources of knowledge). This sentiment is echoed by Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse through the elevated role of Daya Devi. Thus, one who is worshipped in danam, yagam, and homam is Lord Narayana, who has appointed specific deities endowed with the powers of granting the appropriate boons for the performance of these karmas.



Svami Desikan has documented in this verse that Daya Devi stands as the guarantor for these deities in the event they cease to exist before the time for granting the appropriate boons comes about. Thus, if one has mahavishvasam in Daya Devi, She ensures that even the most trivial acts undertaken by Her followers are rewarded with the appropriate benefit. Svami Desikan states that this is not a position that he is taking. Instead, he is merely re-stating what has been established by discerning seers. On this note, we conclude the exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin: "This verse refers to a pious individual, who may perform Shastra-ordained rituals, Vedic rites, some of which are intended to please devas like Indra and Pitrus (manes) as the case may be. They too are time-bound like us; only that their life-time is very long. Daya Devi! The good of any Prapanna, accruing to him because of performing ordained Vedic rituals like sacrifices or Pitru-propitiating acts would not vanish in case the life-time of the object of the ritual expires. You become the guarantor. You are eternal. What a wonderful arrangement!"



Slokam 79

त्वदुपसदनादद्य श्वो वा महाप्रळयेऽपि वा

वितरति निजं पादाम्भोजं वृषाचल शेखरः।

तदिह करुणे तत्तत्क्रीडा तरङ्ग परम्परा-

तरतमतया जुष्टायास्ते दुरत्ययतां विदुः॥ ७९॥

tvad upasadanAd adya shvo vA mahA pralaye(a)pi vA

vitarati nijaM pAdAmbhojaM vR^iShAcala shekharaH|

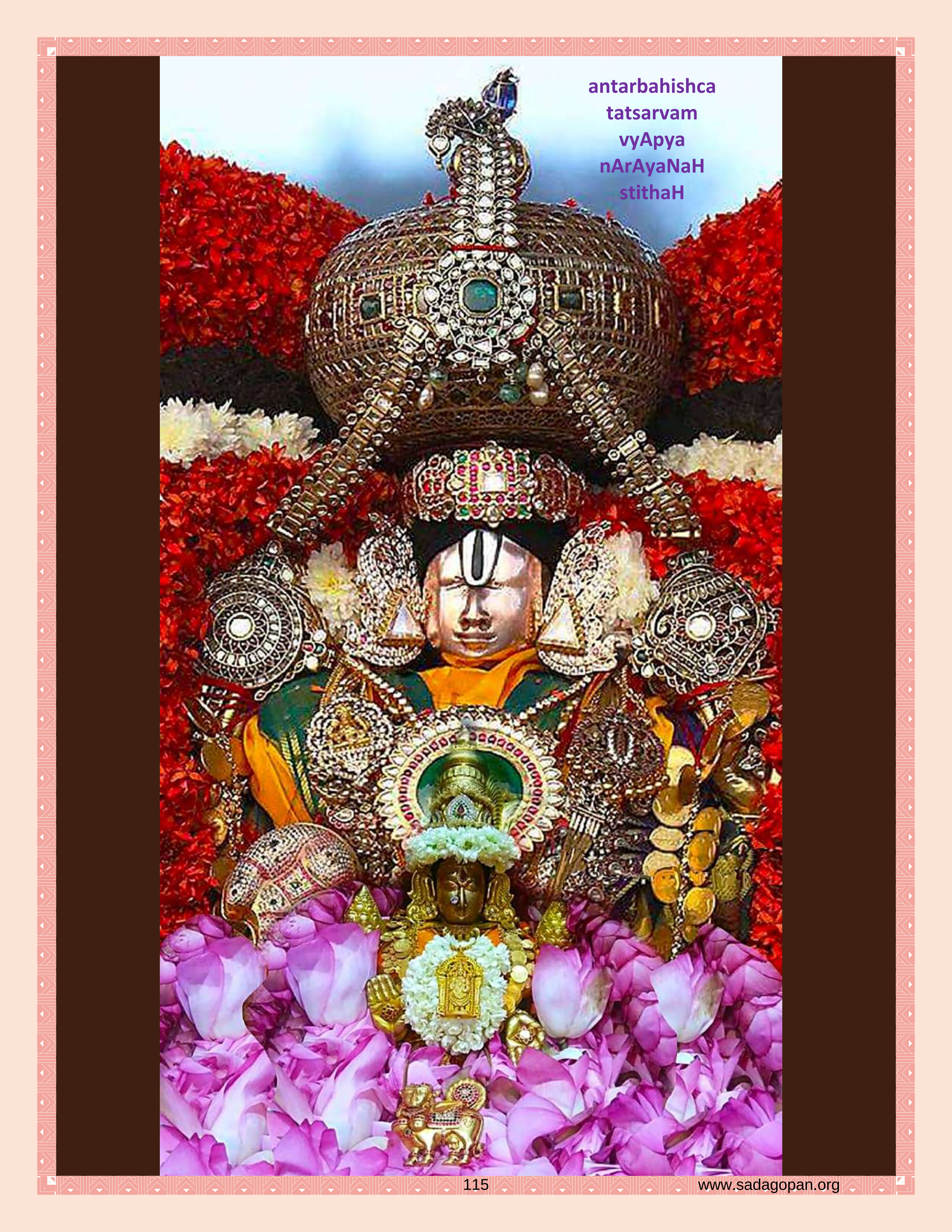
tadiha karuNe tattat krIDA tara~Nga paramparA

taratamatayA juShTAyAste duratyayatAM viduH||79



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

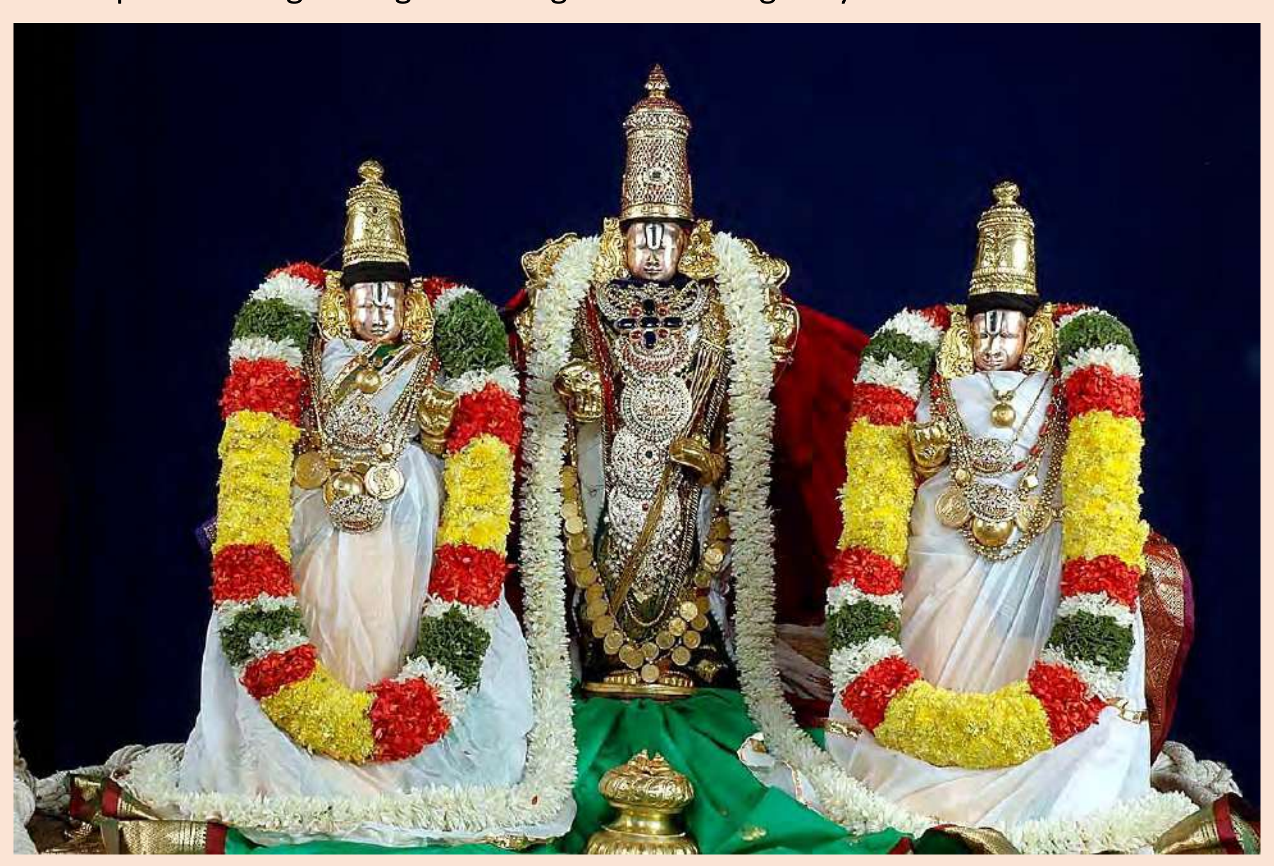
"The seventy-ninth verse is tvad upasadanAd adya shvo vA mahA pralaye(a)pi vA vitarati nijaM pAdAmbhojaM vR^iShAcala shekharaH tadiha karuNe tattat krIDA tara~Nga paramparA taratamatayA juShTAyAste duratyayatAM viduH. The previous verse outlined the fact that Lord Narayana has appointed deities endowed with the power of granting specific boons to their followers. They too are jivAtmas like us. However, they may have a much longer life span. Svami Desikan describes this in the Srimad RahasyatrayasAram as "orE cankiliyilE kaTTappaTTiruppavarkal". This salutation describes the state of one who is requesting benefits from other devathas besides Lord Narayana. Specifically, it is akin to that of a person bound by shackles requesting another bound by the same shackles to be freed from bondage. In particular, when one seeks benefits from these other deities, it is impossible to know when the requested benefit will be granted. Furthermore, uncertainty arises if the deity ceases to exist when the time comes about for granting the requested benefit. Svami Desikan highlighted in the previous verse the fact that Daya Devi stands as the guarantor for these deities and ensures that their followers receive the sought-after benefits at the appropriate time. An important concept highlighted in this instance is that Lord Narayana resides as the indweller (sarvAntarAtmatvam) of all beings, devatantaras included as attested to by the Vedam Rk "antarbahishca tatsarvam vyApya nArAyaNaH stithaH".


antarbahishca
tatsarvam
vyApya
nArAyaNaH
stithaH

Therefore, He is responsible for granting all boons sought from these deities with Daya Devi functioning as the guarantor for these deities. This is also a concept established by Svami Bhashyakarar "sarva shaktya upapattyatvam". For example, Agni, need not refer to the devata Agni. According to aparyotAna vR^itti, this denotes the indweller (antarAtma) of the deity denoted by Agni. It also admits the meaning of the form "agram nayatiti agniH" (that which takes us from our present state to an elevated state). Thus, in this instance it refers to Lord Narayana alone. sarva shabda vAcyatam, namely all usages in the Vedam glorify Lord Narayana without exception. It also denotes "sarva karma samArAdyatvam". Namely, karmas performed for any devata ultimately reach Lord Narayana, who grants the fruits for these karmas, denoted by "sakala phala pradatvam". These facts were captured in the previous verse. Other deities are capable of granting "ekaika phalapradatvam". For example, the slokam "Arogyam bhaskarAdicChet shriyamicChet hutAsanAt ishAnAt j~nAnaM icChEt mokSham icChet janArdanAt" documents this fact. Worship of Surya confers good health, while worship of Agni gives the boon of great wealth. Worship of Siva grants one great knowledge, while worship of Janardana confers mokSham. Lord ViShNu is hailed as "sakala pradopi viShNuH" attesting to the fact that all others in the above verse are capable of granting specific boons. However, Lord Narayana grants everything. Furthermore, it was established in the previous verse that Daya Devi is the cause for this.

In the present verse, Svami Desikan declares "Oh Daya Devi! It is sufficient to gain refuge at Your Feet. For one who begets this, all fruits big and small (aihikam, amuShmikam, kaivalyam, and mokSham) come automatically." This is readily seen in practice. Scores of Bhaktas arrive at the shrine of Lord Srinivasa at the Tirumala hill. Each of them has a specific boon that they desire from Lord Srinivasa. They gain the desired benefits and thus come repeatedly to offer their prayers to Lord Srinivasa time after time, regardless of the travails encountered in the process. Among these Bhaktas, it is impossible to know those who seek moksham to the exclusion of all else. For example, one may have in mind prayers for Lord Srinivasa to rid them of ailments, or success in academic pursuits for their children, or seeking employment, or desiring the marriage for their progeny to a suitable bride/groom following which they wish to perform kalyana utsavam for Lord Srinivasa. Because Lord Srinivasa unfailingly grants these boons to His seekers, they make return visits to Tirumala to offer prayers to Lord Srinivasa. Since He stands ready to grant boons big or small sought by His seekers, He is saluted by a large number of Bhaktas on a daily basis. If Lord Srinivasa remained alone on the Venkatam hill, there was no chance of Him readily granting these boons. It is

entirely on account of Daya Devi's presence by His side that Lord Srinivasa begets the disposition of granting boons big or small sought by His Bhaktas.



Lord Srinivasa forgives our sins due to the eternal presence of Thayar /SrI Daya Devi

The reason for this is the fact that if Lord Srinivasa was at the Venkatam hill by Himself, He would readily observe the transgressions on the part of His Bhaktas. This would only serve to increase His anger and thus arouse His nigraha sankalpam (disposition to mete out punishment in accordance with the severity of the offence). In the Godha Stuti Svami Desikan offers the tribute "karmAnubandhiphaladAnaratasya bhartuH" to denote the fact that the Lord metes out consequence in accordance with one's karma. If one has erred greatly, he receives punishment appropriate for the errors. On the otherhand if one has engaged in pious acts, he begets the fruits commensurate with these acts. Never would the Lord adopt the disposition of forgiving the transgressions and gracing these individuals. It is only on account of Mahalakshmi Thayar that the transgressions of His Bhaktas remain masked from the Lord's view. Since Daya Devi is no different from Mahalakshmi Thayar, it is even appropriate to associate Daya Devi as the Atma for the form of Mahalakshmi Thayar alone. Due to this eternal presence of Thayar/Daya Devi by the side of Lord Srinivasa, He begets the

disposition of gracing His Bhaktas with everything they seek, regardless of their transgressions. The salutation “tvadupAsanAt” has two meanings - one denoting the state of those who seek refuge in Daya Devi and the other denoting the fact that Daya Devi seeks out jivans to dispense Her grace. Here it becomes important to note that Daya is a mere guNam. How could one seek refuge in Daya? The import of this tribute is that one “who seeks the one that Daya Devi has sought refuge - Lord Srinivasa” is always graced. The implication here is that Lord Srinivasa is always under the command of Daya Devi and never denies Her request. This is true at all times including the present, immediate future, as well as at the time of mahApraLayam as evidenced by the tribute “tvad upasadanAd adya shvo vA mahA pralaye(a)pi vA vitarati nijaM pAdAmbhojaM vR^iShAcala shekharaH” of this verse. This highlights the fact that the Feet of Lord Srinivasa serve as a guaranteed refuge for seekers at all times including mahApraLayam. This then leads to the question why not grant every being refuge immediately? Why the long wait until their well-being is realized? The answer to this question is contained in the tribute “rakShApekShAM pratIkShate”. All the Lord is looking for is an appeal for protection on the part of the supplicant. This is the sole reason for Lord Srinivasa’s arrival from Sri Vaikuntam to the Venkatam hill in keeping with the tribute “mAyAvi paramAnandam tyaktvA vaikuNThamuttamaM



svAmi puShkaraNi tIre ramayA sahamodate". This statement explicitly attests to the fact that Lord Srinivasa, replete with joy in the supreme abode of Vaikuntam has given up residence there. Instead, He has taken root at the banks of the SvAmi PuShkaraNi along with His consort Rama (Daya Devi) solely to grace those who come to the Venkatam hill seeking Him. This raises another question. Does a formal request for protection need to be submitted for the Lord to shower His grace? Can this not be done without such a submission? The Sastras explicitly forbid the offering of protection/grace to those who do not seek it in keeping with the declaration "aprArthito natopAye". It must be borne in mind that the Sastras would never document anything that goes against commonly accepted practices from a laukika perspective. For example, one may be in need for vastrams and he may submit a prayer to Lord Srinivasa to grant him an abundance of Vastram. Another may make a similar request for great wealth. A third may seek knowledge in the arts and so forth. Yet another may desire success in the competitive entrance exams for admission to the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT). With this in mind they submit an offering of a certain number of coins tied in yellow cloth to Lord Srinivasa. Thus, such prayers are granted only when requested and not otherwise. Similarly, a person in a position of great authority can grant a seeker a job only if the latter makes the request. One does not make a job offer in a pre-determined way to someone who may be struggling to make ends meet out of concern for their plight. What if the latter spurns the job offer? Thus, for gaining all manner of laukika benefits, one needs to make a formal request. Otherwise, it will simply not come about. Likewise, the performance of sharaNAgati also requires submission of a formal appeal to Lord Srinivasa. goptR^itva varaNam is a necessary angam (accessory of Prapatti) for successfully gaining the sought benefit, that highlights this fact. Likewise, for gaining the parama puruShArtham of moksham, one needs to submit a formal appeal to Lord Srinivasa to enable the successful practice of Bhakti Yogam or admit to one's incapability for adopting this and thus resorting to sharaNagati. Without such an appeal, it is difficult to invoke the Lord's grace. This appeal/prayer is referred to in the salutation "rakShApekSham pratIkShate". This prayer is formally documented as "goptR^itva varaNam", which is an important angam of Prapatti. Thus, Lord Srinivasa along with Daya Devi has arrived at the Venkatam hill expecting the submission of this appeal from His devotees. He stands ready to protect them upon hearing this appeal. We are still examining the first meaning of the tribute "tvad upasadanAd adya shvo vA mahA pralaye(a)pi vA". Those who seek refuge in Daya Devi are assured of the benefit of succor at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa, either today, or in a while or before mahApraLayam sets in. The

other import of this tribute is that in order to gain the anugraham of Daya Devi one needs to gain the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa through surrender to His Feet. How then can one gain the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa.? This is possible by undertaking the Aj~nA anuj~nA kaimkaryams for Lord Srinivasa, which greatly pleases Him and as a consequence opens the flow of His anugraham. This establishes a mechanism for invoking the grace of Lord Srinivasa. The Aj~na and anuj~na kaimkaryams are of several types. Some of them are geared towards gaining aihika phalams (material benefits). These karmas are of three types - upaya upAyopAyam. These are the acts that lead one towards apavargam (mokSham). These include yadR^icCha sukR^itam, which is the result from a good act undertaken in a totally unplanned manner by sheer accident. As a result, one gains AcArya sambandam and thus adopts the upAyam for mokSham. The second is of the form of a good act undertaken knowingly with full awareness of the resulting benefit as documented in the salutation "dharmAyitaIshca" from a previous verse (Verse 74). These could include acts such a digging of a well or constructing a pond near a temple or even the construction of a temple, construction of a nandavanam which offers a supply of flowers for making garlands for Lord Narayana, undertaking the performance of yAgams, as well as giving charity, engaging in homams and japams, undertaking prostrations and circumambulation of Lord Narayana at temples. These are for obtaining material benefits or aihika phalam. Some acts are directed specifically for gaining mokSham - these include the nuances of karma yoga, j~nAna yoga, and Bhakti yoga as well as Prapatti for one who does not have the knowledge and the strength to adopt the arduous prescriptions of Bhakti yoga. Thus, a number of acts have been outlined by means of which one can gain the grace of Lord Srinivasa for various purposes. The Lord dispenses His grace in accordance with the prescribed acts that one has adopted. One who cannot bear the existence of even a single wasted moment during which he has not engaged in some form of kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa, is ready for mokSham, which is duly granted by Lord Srinivasa. This is evidenced in the tribute "yan muhUrtaM kShaNamvApi vasudevo na cintyate sA hAniH mahat Chidram sA brAntiH sa ca vikriyA". This is the state of Paramaikantins, who are engaged in the singular thought of Kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. For such persons, the grace of Lord Srinivasa is instantaneous. If they acquire the status of Arthis, mokSham is immediately granted through Artha prapatti. If they submit the prayer "etat dehAvasAnemAm tvatpAdaM prApaya svayam", mokSham is granted to them at the end of their earthly existence. At that point they are granted an aprAkR^ita sharIram (a body that is totally different from that they had during earthly existence) and blessed with the bliss of eternal kaimkaryam for the Divine

Couple at their permanent bode, Sri Vaikuntam. Karma yogam, j~nAna yogam and Bhakti yogam are also available. The statements "anaditamhita phalam", "kartavyam ityAnukalau" reflect the fact that karmas undertaken without expectation of any rewards, are guaranteed to result in Bhagavan's anugraham. However, due to whatever duShkR^itams (bad karma) that may have arisen, unless the Bhakti yogam practitioner endures all consequences of prArabdha karma, mokSham does not come about for them. This is the considered position of the Sastras. One the other hand one may have undertaken numerous good acts in the spirit of the salutation "dharmAyitaIshca" or incurred "yAdR^icChika sukR^itam" (as defined earlier). When the appropriate time for receiving the fruits from these actions comes about, the Lord's grace may cause the individual to seek an AcArya and gain the means to mokSham by way of Bhakti yogam or Prapatti. Thus, the salutation "adya" from this verse denotes the state of those who have undertaken Artha prapatti, while the tribute "shvo vA" refers to those who request moksham at the end of their earthly existence. The usage "mahApraLayepi vA" denotes the granting of mokSham to Bhakti yogis. It must be emphasized that the salutation here does not literally refer to mahApraLayam. Instead, it denotes the granting of mokSham to Bhakti yogis, when their prArabdha karma has been fully expended. It also applies to elevated jivans occupying the status of Brahma, who may decide to undertake the upAsana of Bhakti or prapatti. In this case, the Sastram states that moksham is granted only when they complete their duration of occupation of their elevated post as determined by Lord Narayana. Since the post of Brahma prevails until the onset of MahApraLaya, he has to necessarily wait until his tenure comes to its pre-ordained conclusion. Thus, it is established that one's mokSham is guaranteed either instantaneously, or in some time or after an extended period when one seeks refuge at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. The import of the verse so far is that Lord Srinivasa graces us with the upAyam of His Lotus Feet as our guaranteed refuge for seeking mokSham. The salutation "vR^iShAcala shekharaH" refers to Lord Srinivasa, who is standing on top of the Tirumala hill and never violates the command of Daya Devi. The implication here is that the Divya Mangala Vigraham of Lord Srinivasa adorns the Venkatam hill. The Lord of such magnificence, replete with the marks of the shankha (conch), padma (lotus), and gadA (mace) on His feet, which exude the fragrance of the Vedas, makes the Feet available to those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that Lord Srinivasa, who grants the nitya sUris and ubhaya nacchiyArs (Sri Devi, Bhu Devi, and Neela Devi) in Sri Vaikuntam the bliss of enjoying His Lotus Feet, enables us too to partake of the same anubhavam due to His arrival

at the Venkatam hill. This is the import of the tribute vitarati nijaM pAdAmbhojaM vR^iShAcala shekharaH".



One may ask what is so great about the Feet of Lord Srinivasa? The glory of the Feet is enjoyed by Periya Azhvar through his PeriyAzhvAr Tirumozhi Pasuram (1.3.1) describing the baby Krishna sucking at the toe of His foot with great relish. The Pasuram is "cItakkaDaluL amutanna tEvaki kOtaik kuzhalAL acOtaikkup pOttanta pEtaik kuzhavi piDittu cuvaittuNum pAtakkamalankal kANirE pavaLa vAyIr vantu kANIrE." The salutation "cItakkaDaluL amutanna" highlights the difference between the ocean of Lord Krishna's feet and the commonly encountered ocean. The former is ocean of nectarine elixir (amR^itam), while the latter has salty water. Furthermore, the latter contains the badaba agni, which cannot be extinguished at the time of PraLayam. Thus, the reference in the Azhvar pasuram pertains to the nectarine ocean. This baby Krishna, born to Devaki was handed to Yasodai through

the kotai kuzhal. Further, the little baby is seen sucking His toe with great relish by holding it with His little hand and enjoying the taste. The Azhvar invites attention to the posture of this child lying majestically on the banyan leaf in this manner. The Azhvar salutes Devaki as the bearer of this ocean of amR^itam in her garbham and delivering Him to the world. Therefore, She is hailed as “tiruvinvaDivu tEvaki”. The “cItakkaDal” is in reality, the ocean of Daya. The salutation from a prior verse(verse 22) “kalashodadhi sampadobhavatyAH karuNe sanmati manthasamskR^ItAyAH amR^itAmshamavaimi divya dehaM mR^ita sanjIvanamanjanAcalendoH” becomes relevant here. Namely Daya Devis is the ocean that lets Herself be churned to produce by way of amR^itam the Divyamangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa, who is made available to all without distinction of any kind. He is glorified in this salutation as “mR^ita sanjIvanamanjanAcalendoH” which attests to the fact that He is capable of reviving one from a dead state. In this context, death is the state of remaining far away from contact with Lord Srinivasa. Thus, revival from this state denotes the help of Lord Srinivasa in ensuring that one develops a taste for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam.



vaTasya patrasya puTe shayAnaM bAlaM mukundaM manasAsmarAmi

Lord Srinivasa, who bestows the anubhavam of His Feet to all His seekers, as Krishna is seen enjoying the anubhavam of the same Feet through the Azhvar Pasuram! The "vaiShNava bhogya lipsayA" tribute from Sri Parashara Bhattar becomes relevant here. The desire to enjoy His own Feet comes to the Lord due to the fact that this is the object of supreme enjoyment for VaiShNavas. The Lord is left wondering "What is the flavor inherent to these feet? May be I too should partake of it." Thus, He is enjoying His own Feet in the manner described in the shlokam "karAravindena padAravindaM mukharavinde viniveshayantam vaTasya patrasya puTe shayAnaM bAlaM mukundaM manasAsmarAmi" (The little child with lotus-hands, lotus-feet, lotus-lips is sucking the big toe of His foot reclining on the banyan leaf. My mind contemplates on this infant Lord Mukunda.)

The second reason for this enjoyment is explained through the analogy of a pregnant mother partaking of food out of concern for the well-being of her child in the womb. In a like manner, Lord Narayana holds all sentient and insentient beings in their subtle state in His stomach during praLayam. Realizing that the sole source of nourishment and protection for these beings lies in His Feet, He is seen sucking on His toe with relish. These feet, which are a source of supreme enjoyment for the Lord Himself as described in the Azhvar pasuram are bestowed to all His seekers by Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root at the Venkatam hill. The reason for this disposition of Lord Srinivasa is Daya Devi. This raises the question, of some being granted the anubhavam of His Feet instantaneously, while some others gain this in time and yet others wait an extremely long time to beget this anubhavam. Instead, why not grant the anubhavam to all at the same time? This is due to the fact that each of these beings in the universe have committed pious acts. They need to be rewarded for this suitably. Thus, the time at which they receive the anubhavam of Lord Srinivasa's Feet is an ordering based on the pious acts that they have undertaken.

Next the salutation "tadiha karuNe tattat krIDA tara~Nga paramparA taratamatayA juShTAyAste duratyayatAM viduH" is considered. Svami Desikan has described Daya Devi as verily the Ganga river. This river has extremely cool waters. It is extremely pure. Daya Devi too shares these characteristics and is replete with waves. Ultimately just like the waves merge with the Ganga river, once we seek refuge in Daya Devi, our deliverance at the feet of Lord Srinivasa is assured. The large waves take a while to subside, while the smaller waves subside instantaneously. The manner of granting the bliss of the Lord's Feet is similar in this regard and is dispensed either instantaneously, after a while, or after a long while, in accordance with the extent of the pious acts undertaken by the individuals. The



Daya Devi is verily the cool and pure Ganga river

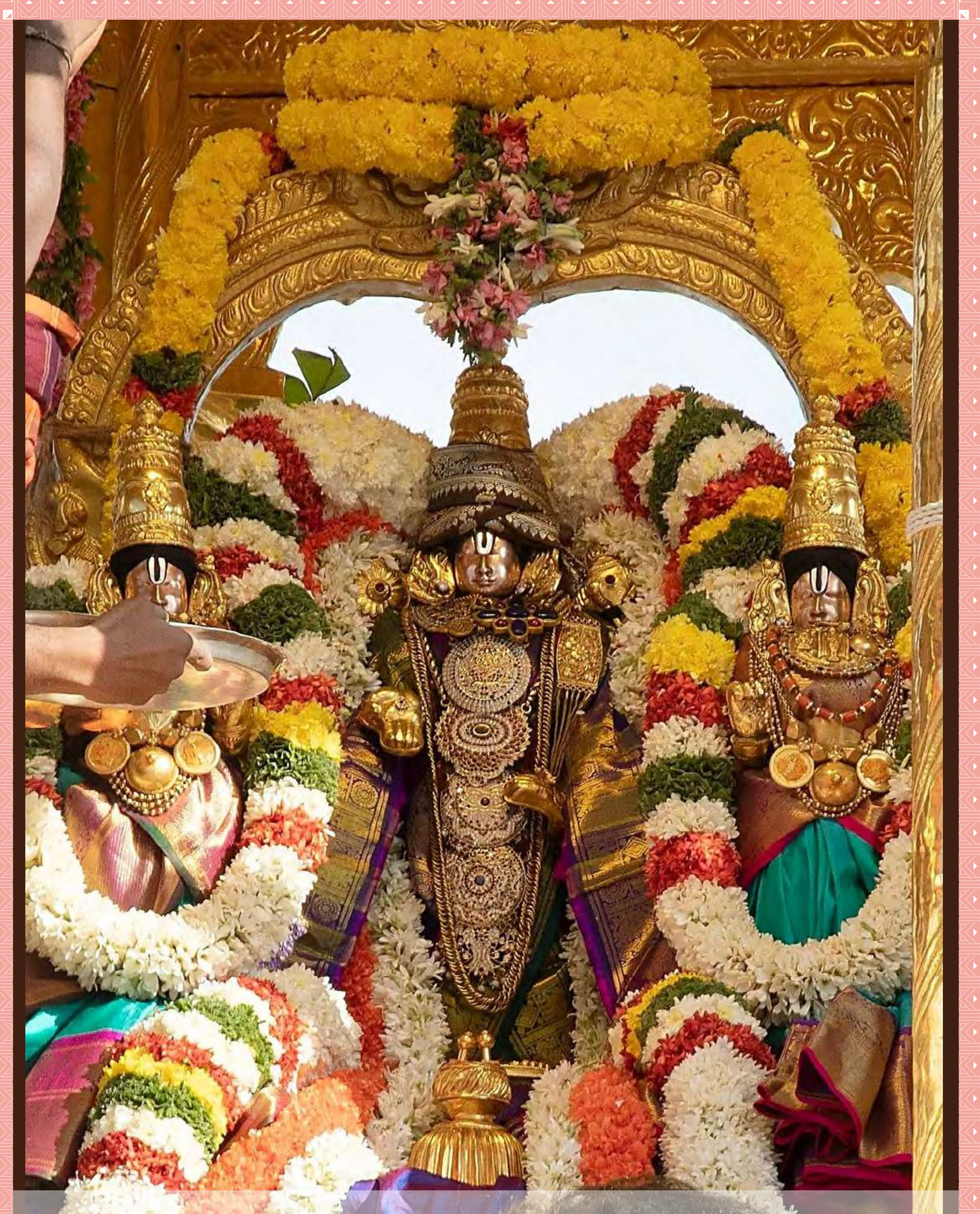
key message herein is that seeking refuge in Daya Devi guarantees the bliss of enjoyment of Lord Srinivasa's feet.

The other interpretation of "tvadupAsanAd" is now examined. Daya Devi seeks out jivans to bestow Her grace. If She sets out thus, the attainment of Lord Srinivasa's feet is bound to follow. A question that arises here is that "if Daya Devi seeks out jivans to bestow Her grace, will She necessarily be accompanied by Lord Srinivasa on this errand?" The answer is: Absolutely! Lord Srinivasa is a parama kAruNikar (extremely compassionate one). His intent is to grace one and all to ensure their well-being. This will become evident in the next decad, where Svami Desikan describes the principal avatarams of Lord Narayana and points out that these avatarams come about on account of Daya Devi.

In particular, while discussing the Rama avataram, Svami Desikan points out that the reason for this avataram is the construction of the bridge across the ocean. The destruction of Ravana was a secondary objective. Even the war with Ravana was meant only to dispense His grace. If Ravana's destruction was the sole objective, this could have been swiftly accomplished by the use of the BrahmAstra during Lord Rama's opening encounter with him. Instead, Lord Rama demonstrated to Ravana, that He was the supreme being and that there was still an opportunity for reform and seeking refuge if Ravana had a change of heart. Lord Rama sent him back with the message "You have fought well today. Go back to your palace and get rest. Come back refreshed for battle tomorrow". The intent was to afford Ravana an opportunity to express remorse for his outrageous actions upon beholding the Divya mangala vigraham of Lord Rama and perform a surrender, while restoring Sita to Lord Rama. This would ensure the well-being of Ravana. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, Daya Devi seeks out jivas to grace them. She is followed by Lord Srinivasa, who has given up residence in His eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntam, to take root at the Venkatam hill. Svami Desikan in the ParamArtha Stuti, while discussing the disposition of Lord Rama declares "yadi vA rAvaNa ityudIritaM te". The context is the sharaNAgati of Vibhishana, for which there ensued a spirited discussion in the Vanara camp. At that juncture, Lord Rama declared "Let alone Vibhishana, who you describe as belonging to the adversary camp. Even if Ravana himself arrived and sought refuge, I stand ready to grant it." Lord Rama further states "dattamasyAbhayam pura", which reflects the fact that it may seem as though the Lord encouraged the discussion among the Vanaras. However, in reality He granted abhayam to Vibhishana, while the latter was airborne and made the request. The discussion was a mere formality since Lord Rama wanted to ensure a welcome for Vibhishana from the Vanara army.


Daya Devi seeks out jivas
to grace them

The inner meaning is that Lord Rama wanted the puruShakAratvam from Anjaneya, who had the role of an AcArya, to accept the sharaNAgati of Vibhishana. Thus, it is beyond reasonable doubt that the Lord too seeks out jivans with the sole intent of gracing them and thus accompanies Daya Devi on this mission. In the mangalasasanam to TirukAtkarai in his Tiruvaimozhi pasuram 9.6.10, Svami NammAzhvar declares "vArikkoNDu unnai vizhunkuvan kANil enRu ArvuRRa ennai ozhiya ennin munnam pArittu tAn ennai muRRa parukinAn kAr okkum kATkaraiyappan kaDiyanE" Svami NammAzhvar approaches the Lord of TirukATkarai with the intent of enjoying Him by devouring Him. However, the Lord at this Divya Desam would like to enjoy the Azhvar in the same manner. Svami NammAzhvar affirms that if the separation between him and the Lord was 100 feet, and if he took steps that brought him ten feet closer, the Lord rushed out and covered the remaining 90 feet to get near the Azhvar. Svami NammAzhvar employs the salutation "kaDiyan" (hard-hearted one) and thus the Lord's position is even more astonishing, reflecting the Lord's abundant vAtsalyam. Here the Azhvar has adopted nAyikA bhavam. In this state the only goal for the nAyika is to enjoy their nAyakan (master). In this state it is relevant to ask whether one can swallow with one's eyes an object. The Azhvar answers this in the affirmative through the salutation "vArikkoNDu unnai vizhunkuvan kANil enRu ArvuRRu" The implication here is that the exact functioning of each sense organ is immaterial. The sense organs can operate interchangeably is the position of Svami NammAzhvar. The Azhvar states "Emperuman beholding me with the desire to enjoy Him and rushing towards Him, responds in kind by rushing even further to accept me!" Thus, the Azhvar instructs us that if we take one step towards the Lord, He traverses a mile to meet us. This arises on account of the Lord's intense desire to enjoy His parama Bhaktas. This is the manner of the anubhavam when it comes to Daya Devi seeking out jivans to confer Her grace. This is the second meaning of "tvadupAsanAd". Once Daya Devi adopts this position, what follows is "adya shvo vA mahA pralaye(a)pi vA vitarati nijaM pAdAmbhojaM". Namely, these jivans are graced with the Feet of Lord Srinivasa either instantaneously, or after sometime or after an extended period of time. It may be recalled that during the Krishna avataram, Kamsa fearing death at the hands of Devaki's eighth child sets out to kill her. At that time Vasudeva pleads with folded hands and appeals to Kamsa to spare Devaki's life. First, he tries to use words of wisdom from Vedanta. Specifically, Vasudeva addresses Kamsa as "adya vA abda shataMte vA mR^ityurvai prANinAM dhruvaH" (Once one is born, death is inevitable. This may happen in a short while or after a long time. Why do you worry about this?) It is a different matter whether those words were heeded



Lord Srinivasa, resides at the banks of the SvAmi PuShkaraNi along with His consorts to grace those who seek Him

or not. For example, when one starts a job, the retirement age is pre-determined and made known at the outset. Having this knowledge enables us to accept the inevitable end date with poise. Again, this causes different reactions. Some may desire extension of their working days, while some others may look forward to wrapping up their work by the pre-determined retirement date. Likewise, at the time of our birth, our lifespan is pre-determined by Lord Narayana. However, the important point to note is that we are not aware of the time of our death. That is why one who is ninety years of age desires to live for 120 years in the manner of Svami Bhashyakarar. Again, if one is aware of the time of one's end, it would spark widely varying reactions, with some being content with their lifespan and some others seeking a longer lifespan in the manner of one seeking an extension to one's employment. Just like the end of one's life is pre-determined at the time of their birth, so too is the guarantee of attaining Lord Srinivasa's feet for those who have sought refuge in Daya Devi. Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavadgita "mama mAyA duratyayA". The implication here is that regardless of the intensity of one's tapas and japam, it is impossible to overcome the overwhelming events arising on account of Lord Narayana's mAyA. However, this Daya Satakam verse provides the assurance that those who adopt Daya Devi as their sole refuge are effortlessly able to overcome the events arising on account of Lord Narayana's mAyA. Thus, Daya Devi's grace becomes a pre-requisite for overcoming events dictated by Lord Narayana's mAyA. Therefore, two important points are established in this verse. (1) Those who seek refuge in Daya Devi are bound to receive the grace of Lord Srinivasa since He never violates Her command (2) Those who receive the grace of Daya Devi are effortlessly able to overcome the effects of Lord Narayana's mAyA-avidya, karma vAsana and the like. avidya gives rise to misconceptions that the body itself is the Atma (not knowing the distinction between the body and soul), svatantrAtmabhramam (namely that we are the masters of all we purvey and thus have a sense of complete independence instead of recognizing our complete dependence on Lord Narayana, who makes everything possible for us.) Thus, regardless of whether we seek refuge in Daya Devi or She seeks us out to confer Her grace, due to the appeal of "rakShApekShAM pratIkShate", if we take two steps towards Her, She traverses miles to bless us.

The benefits from Her blessings are bound to come about either instantaneously, or in some time or after a long time. However, the benefit from Her blessing of getting Lord Srinivasa's feet is guaranteed. This is the key message from this Daya Satakam verse.


rakShApekShAM pratIkShate
Sri

With the prayerful thought of seeking Daya Devi’s grace on account of which we are guaranteed the bliss of enjoyment of Lord Srinivasa’s lotus feet, we conclude the exposition of this Daya Satakam verse.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“Oh Daya Devi! By reason of my having surrendered unto You, I am sure He will grant me the fruit of Moksha bliss today, tomorrow or at long last at the time of the great deluge. It is only a matter of time. That the Moksha fruit is definitely promised for me is NOT IN DOUBT. The indefiniteness is understandable in terms of the following model.

The Daya flow torrent comes. There are waves, big, medium, small, and the like. I am in one spot. The wave is to submerge me to liberate me. When it is going to submerge one cannot be exactly predicted. So it is that I say I will definitely enjoy the fruit one day. The flow cannot be arrested and cannot be avoided. How can it be? It is insurmountable just like the Lord’s mAyA.”



Slokam 80

प्रणिहितधियां त्वत्संपृक्ते वृषाद्रि शिखामणौ

प्रसृमर सुधा धाराकारा प्रसीदति भावना ।

दृढमिति दये दत्तास्वादं विमुक्ति वलाहकं

निभृत गरुतो निध्यायन्ति स्थिराशय चातकाः ॥८० ॥

praNihita dhiyAM tvat saMpR^ikte vR^iShAdri shikhAmaNau

prasR^imara sudhA dhArAkArA prasIdati bhAvanA|

dR^iDhamiti daye dattAsvAdaM vimukti valAhakaM

nibhR^ita garuto nidhyAyanti sthirAshaya chAtakAH||80



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

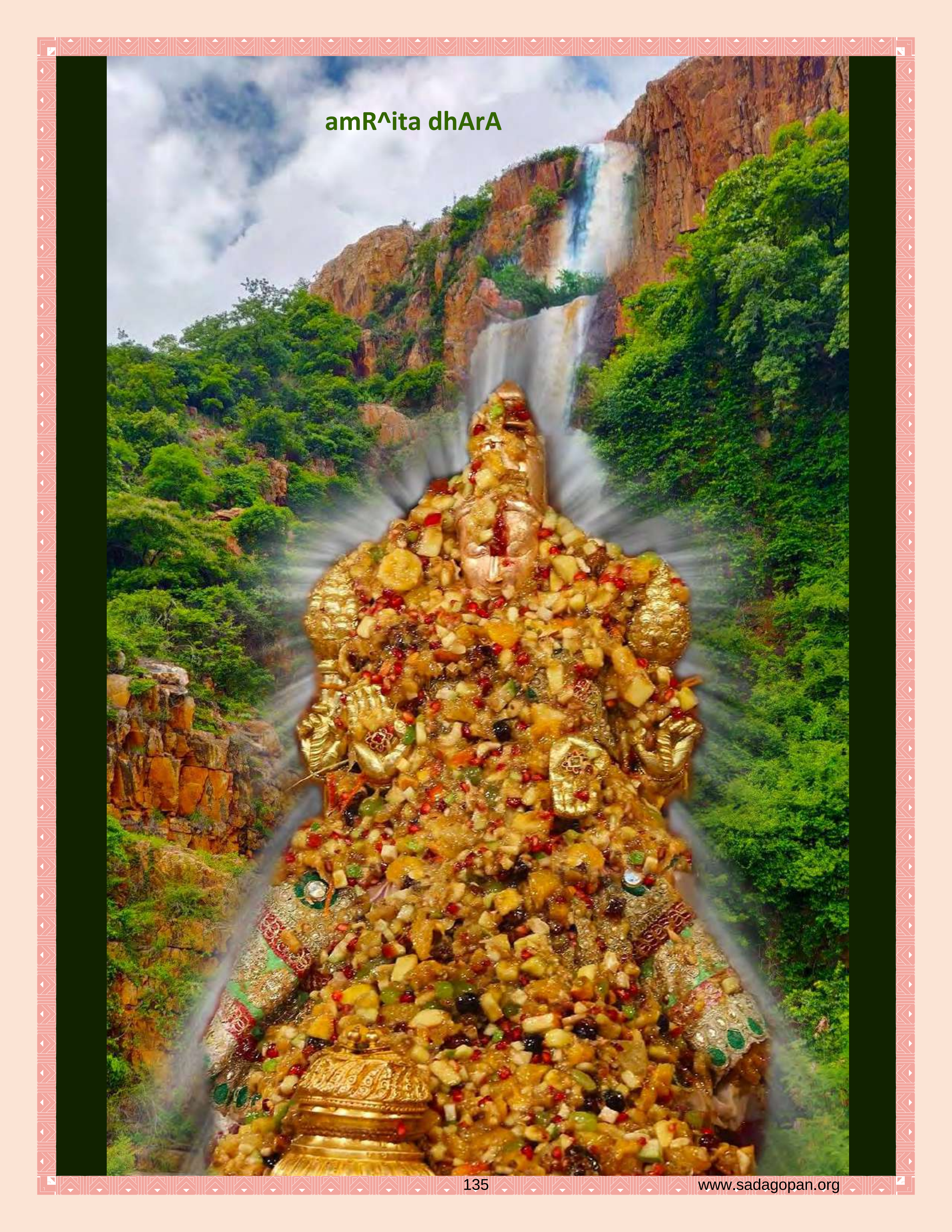
"This verse is "praNihita dhiyAM tvat saMpR^ikte vR^iShAdri shikhAmaNau prasR^imara sudhA dhArAkArA prasIdati bhAvanA dR^iDhamiti daye dattAsvAdaM vimukti valAhakaM nibhR^ita garuto nidhyAyanti sthirAshaya chAtakAH." The previous verse highlighted the fact that once one seeks refuge in Daya Devi, moksham is assured. There need be no doubt about this fact. There are two concepts known as ayogya vyavacChedham and anyogya vyavacChedham. These are illustrated through examples. First, "sha~NkhaH padara eva" The term eva is reflective of ayogya vyavacChedham in that a conch cannot be of any color other than white. Thus, it establishes the fact that the conch is undoubtedly white. In other words, the conch cannot be seen bereft of the white color. Next, anyogya vyavacChedham is considered. The statement "pArtha eva dhanurdharaH" illustrates this. The import here is that the skill of archery cannot be seen in anyone else besides Partha (Arjuna). In the context of the previous Daya Satakam verse, ayogya vyavacChedham comes about from the statement that when one seeks refuge in Daya Devi, one's moksham is guaranteed. There is no question of not getting this benefit.

In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan describes the role of Daya Devi in bestowing Bhagavad anubhavam to great yogis as well as commoners like us. The salutation "praNihita dhiyAM tvat saMpR^ikte vR^iShAdri shikhAmaNau prasR^imara sudhA dhArAkArA prasIdati bhAvanA" alludes to the fact that there

are two routes for moksham - namely Bhakti yogam and Prapatti. For Bhakti yogis undertaking the prescribed upAsanam, the shAkShAtkAram (direct experience) of Lord Narayana, is made possible by Daya Devi. The upAsanas start with yama niyama prANAyAmas and culminate in samAdhi. Samadhi is the state wherein Bhagavad anubhavam becomes possible. This comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi. Even to gain an inclination for adopting the upAsana, takes an extraordinary act of tapas.

In the paradevatA pAramArthyAdhikaram of Srimad RahasyatraysAram, Svami Desikan states "sUryasyaivat yo bhaktaH saptajanmAntharam naraH tasyaivatu prasAdena rudra bhaktaH prajAyate shankarasyAt yo bhaktaH sapta janmAntharam naraH tasyaivat prasAdena viShNu bhakta prajAyate vAsudevasya yo bhaktaH saptajanmAntharam naraH tasyaivat prasAdena vAsudeve praLIyate". (If one has seven births as a Bhakta of Surya, he begets the eighth birth as a Bhakta of Rudra. Upon completion of seven births of Bhakti to Rudra, one is blessed with birth as ViShNu Bhakta. After seven births as a viShNu Bhakta, he becomes united with Vasudeva and attains moksham.) Thus, it is established that one needs to endure several births replete with Bhakti in order to gain bhakti for Lord Vasudeva.

In the DevanAyaka PancAshat salutation "ye janmakoTibhirupArjita shuddha dharmAH teShAM bhavaccharaNabhaktiratIva bhogyA tvajjIvitaistridashanAyaka durlabhaistaiH AtmAnamapya kathayaH svayamAtmavantam." Svami Desikan declares that after an extremely large number of births one attains the state of singular Bhakti for Lord Devanayaka. These beings consider the path of Bhakti yogam for the feet of Devanayaka as the object of supreme enjoyment. The same sentiment is echoed in the tribute "tvat saMpR^ikte vR^iShAdri shikhAmaNau" of this Daya Satakam verse. The import of this tribute is that Lord Srinivasa, who is never separated from Daya Devi, stands as the adornment for the Venkatam hill. The inseparability of dampatis is also alluded to by Kalidasa in the context of his Raghuvamsham tribute "vAgarthAviva saMpR^iktau vAgartha pratipattaye jagataH pitarau vande pArvatiparameshvarau" denoting that the speech and underlying meaning are inseparable in the manner of his arAdhya mUrti of Parvati and Siva. Here Svami Desikan emphasizes the inseparability of Thayar from Perumal through the salutation "tvat saMpR^ikte vR^iShAdri shikhAmaNau" to denote the fact that without Daya Devi, there is no Perumal and vice versa. The alankaram of Lord Srinivasa for the Venkatam hill is documented in Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram "tilatam ulakukkAi ninRa tiruvEnkaDattemperumAnE". The Venkatam hill stands as the alankaram for the entire universe. Lord Srinivasa is jewel in the crown serving as the adornment for the Venkatam hill!


amR^ita dhArA

The tribute "praNihita dhiyAM" denotes those whose minds is replete with singular focus on Lord Srinivasa, and on account of His grace engage in upAsana of Bhakti yogam. For such beings, the tribute "prasR^imara sudhA dhArAkArA prasIdati bhAvanA" indicates that their dhyanam increases multi-fold. Their dhyanam itself is in the form of "prasR^imara sudhA dhArAkArA", namely their dhyanam is in the form of a torrential flow of amrutam that is gushing forth in all directions. Due to their focus on Lord Srinivasa and His resulting grace, their dhyanam attains samAdhi, when sAkShAtkAram - direct experience of Bhagavan becomes possible. Svami Bhashyakarar defines dhyanam to be "taila dhArAvat avicChinna smR^iti santAna rUpam", which means that the constant thought of Lord Srinivasa occurs in the manner of continuous uninterrupted flow of oil, without obstruction.

Svami Desikan goes one step further in discussing this concept in the context of Daya Devi's anugraham in that he describes the dhyanam in terms of amR^ita dhAra - torrential flow of amR^itam. The reason for this is Lord Srinivasa's eternal association with Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi ensures the fructification of the upAsana of Bhakti yogis on account of Her eternal association with Lord Srinivasa, which results in His grace for them. The import of this salutation is that one needs to develop a sincere desire to seek Lord Srinivasa, while going to offer prostration to Him. Without this sincere desire, the act of offering prostration to Lord Srinivasa does not gain a sense of fulfillment. In the context of Bhakti yogis, their upAsana is accompanied by a sincere desire to seek Lord Srinivasa. Hence their efforts are successful. Daya Devi induces in them the sincere desire to seek Lord Srinivasa, ensuring the success of their efforts. In days of yore, due to this reason, elders would instruct children to develop a disposition to seek Lord Srinivasa. For example, the months of Chaitra and Vaikasi are replete with Brahmotsavams at various Divya Desams. Would it not be a great experience for children to gain Bhagavad anubhavam by visiting these Divya Desams? For this to come about, elders must necessarily instruct their children in the importance of taking part in these utsavams. Only when such a desire is firmly instilled, will one experience regret of not having partaken of the Bhagavad anubhavam during a given year on account of other circumstances. During adiyen's growing years in Navalpakkam, Brahmotsavam would take place at Kanchipuram every year. In the present day one has to worry about troubling someone for a ten day stay in order to take part in the Brahmotsavam activities. In those days, it was not an issue at all. Visitors would sleep at the Temple. Daily rituals of snanam and anushtanam would take place easily due to the availability of a lake/pond in the Temple premises.


SrI PerarulAla PerumAL – SrI Kanchi

Availability of food was not an issue either due to the large number of tadhIyArAdhanams that were on offer. All one needed to bring along were the Vastrams, Tiruman petti (box for Tiruman), and chombu (small pot like vessel). One could then be blissfully engaged in parayanam and Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. During the utsavams the Lord is tilted from one side to the other by the Kaimkaryaparas to provide a beautiful sevai. Instructing young kids in the nuances of such sevais gives rise to a desire for them to witness these utsavams in person and experience the Bhagavad Sevai. The swaying of the ornaments and garlands adorning the Lord during these Utsavams, when the utsava murti is tilted from one side to the other is a glorious sight. The description of ornaments on specific utsavam days is another captivating aspect of the sevai. So too is the description of the playing of musical instruments and rendering of specific songs. For some, the most captivating feature of these utsavams is the variety of dishes on offer by way of prasadam. In this manner, instructing people in specific aspects of the utsavam that appeal to them, one can arouse interest and spark a desire for participation in these utsavams. This is a step-by-step process, which culminates in the instruction that Bhagavad anubhavam is the ultimate puruShArtham, which needs to be sought by all and can only be granted by Lord Narayana. Acharyas alone can influence common people to get the underlying message from this final instruction. Not only that, the desire and enthusiasm for the kaimkaryam should forever remain unsatiated. Never once should the feeling set in that this is the same utsavam that we enjoyed the previous year. Therefore, it is alright to miss out on the festivities this time.

For example, the avatara utsavam for Sri Varadaraja Perumal takes place in a special manner each year starting with Tirumanjanam early in the morning followed by the rendition of Svami Desika stotrams. Just because one was able to take part in the utsavam once, they should not rest content. Instead, it should translate into the yearning for repeated sevais year after year. This anubhava parivAham (gushing out) is important for those undertaking the upAsana of Bhakti yogam. The one who induces this anubhavam is Daya Devi as documented by Svami Desikan in this Daya Satakam verse. The dhyAnam as defined earlier blooms fully for Bhakti yogam upAsakas in the manner of the amR^ita dhAra. This is made possible entirely due to Daya Devi. The tribute "dR^iDhamiti daye dattAsvAdaM vimukti valAhakaM" documents the fact the anubhavam of dhyanam, which is unfailingly granted to these upAsakas, and which is extremely sweet tasting like the nectarine elixir is on account of Daya Devi. The salutation "vimukti valAhakam" denotes the fact that the dhyanam which culminates in moksham is in the form of

a cloud. The implication is that these practitioners of the upAsana view moksham as the rain bearing cloud.



The Rain-bearing Cloud

The reason for this is that those suffering from the sweltering heat of the summer, anxiously look forward to relief from the onset of rain. They behold the rain-bearing cloud with a sense of great expectation. The cool rain offers relief from the scorching heat and sultriness. In a like manner, these yogis too look forward to moksham with the expectation of relief from samsAric heat and sultriness. The inner meaning is that Lord Srinivasa in the form of the rain-bearing cloud grants these upasakas the ultimate puruShArtham of moksham. Svami Desikan further affirms through the tribute "dR^iDhamiti daye dattAsvAdaM" that the attainment of this benefit is certain for these upAsakas. Their demeanor in this regard is captured in the tribute "nibhR^ita garuto nidhyAyanti sthirAshaya chAtakAH" The upamAnam (simile) here is that these Bhakti yogam upAsakas resemble the ChAtaka bird, which only partakes of fresh rain water and spurns the offering of all

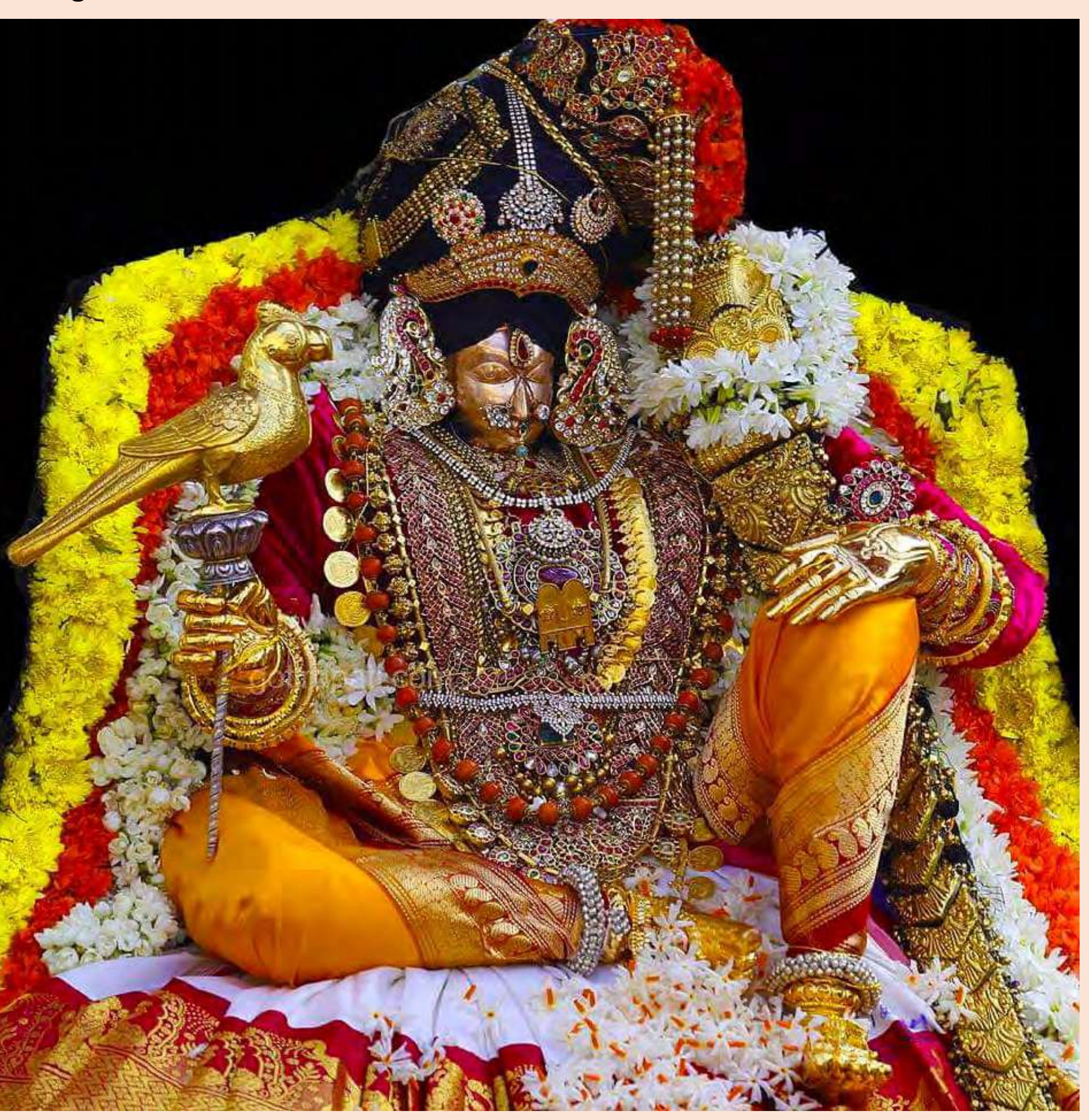
other water bodies no matter what. The ChAtaka bird is anxiously looking at the rain-bearing cloud for the guaranteed imminent rainfall to quench its thirst. Likewise, the Bhakti yogis are looking at the rain-bearing cloud known as Srinivasa for their guaranteed deliverance, which ensures complete Brahma anubhavam. Thus, it is established in this verse that when one begets the blessings of Daya Devi, moksham through the grace of Lord Srinivasa is guaranteed. The tribute "nibhR^ita garuto nidhyAyanti" refers to the fact that the Chataka bird has its wings folded while viewing the rain-bearing cloud. In a like manner, Bhakti yogis possessed with firm conviction focus their thoughts on Lord Srinivasa alone. Lord Srinivasa is glorified as "Vimukti valAhakan" (rain bearing cloud that guarantees moksham).



With Her blessings moksham is guaranteed

It is the considered position of a few commentators that this verse exclusively pertains to practitioners of Bhakti yogam. Some others take the position that the first two lines of this verse document the state of Bhakti yogis, while the last two lines describe the state of Prapannas. The latter interpretation is presented

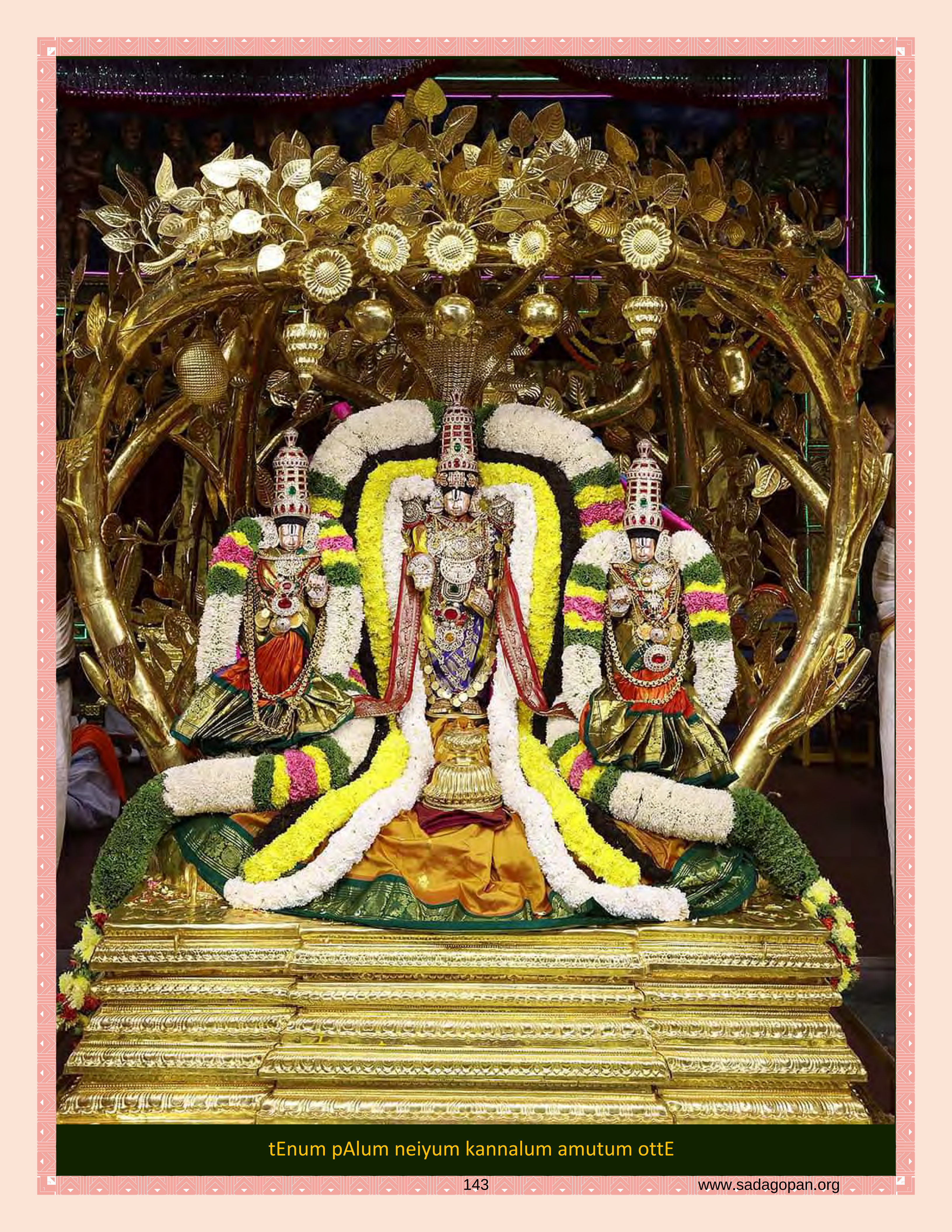
now. Specifically, the last two lines of this verse highlight the fact that mumukshus (those desirous of gaining moksham) who do not have the means to pursue the arduous prescriptions of Bhakti yogam, resort to sharaNAgati. These akinchanas (helpless ones), are guaranteed of the grace of Lord Srinivasa due to the efforts of Daya Devi, which causes them to adopt Prapatti. These Prapannas as well as Bhakti yogis have Lord Srinivasa as the singular focus of all their upAsanas. They do not resort to devatAntharas for anything. In this regard they resemble the Chataka bird, which only partakes of fresh water from the rain-bearing cloud while spurring the offering from all other water bodies.



Once She graces prapannas, there is no need for devatantaras

The implication here is that once the grace of Daya Devi is gained, there is no need to approach devatAntharas for anything. The tribute "nidhyAyanti sthirAshaya chAtakAH" emphasizes the fact that the Chataka bird looks at the rain-bearing cloud with firm conviction that the cloud will deliver rain, which will quench the thirst of the bird. In a like manner, Prapannas and Bhakti yogam practitioners are blessed with the firm conviction that Lord Srinivasa has arrived at the Venkatam hill, giving up residence in Sri Vaikuntam, only to bestow His grace on them. The kALa megham of Lord Srinivasa is described in the verse "vR^iShagiri kriShNamegha janitAm" as one that delivers all from samsaric heat. In this verse the same sentiment is echoed in a slightly different context. Specifically, Lord Srinivasa is described here as "vimukti valAhakam". Svami Desikan documents the state of Prapannas in the nyAsa tilakam tribute "prAyaH prapadane puMsAM paunaH punyaM nivArayan" denoting the fact that sharaNAgati for the sake of one's moksham needs to be performed only once. This is conveyed by way of assurance from Lord Ranganatha in having His hand in a slightly raised abhayam posture affirming to one and all that "Performance of Prapatti at His feet once is sufficient. There is no need to remind Him repeatedly of this fact." Likewise, in this verse Svami Desikan declares that Prapannas, who have secured the grace of Daya Devi, engage in dhyanam of Lord Srinivasa alone with their hands held on their hearts replete with the knowledge that they are assured of the Lord's protection in the same manner as the Chataka bird, with folded wings looking at the rain-bearing cloud for water to quench its thirst. Thus, both perspectives about this verse - one pertaining to Bhakti yogis and the other outlining applicability to both Bhakti yogis and Prapannas are equally valid.

Thus, verses 71-80 focus on the Bhagavad anubhava rasam and Daya Devi's elevated role in facilitating this for Prapannas and Bhakti yogis. The key import of these verses is that once Daya Devi's grace is secured, one's moksham and hence complete BrahmAnanda anubhavam is guaranteed. This is affirmed by the Bhagavadgita salutation "nehAbhikrama nAsho(a)sti pratyavAyo na vidyAte". This salutation contains the answer to self-doubt that may plague one that has undertaken a good act along the lines of "I have undertaken this good act. However, this has been interrupted. Would the effort be wasted?" The answer from this salutation is a resounding **no**. In a like manner, if one has sought refuge in Daya Devi the effort is never wasted. Through Her numerous upakArams one becomes the beneficiary of all manner of benefits culminating in Moksham. Her role in guaranteeing complete BrahmAnanda anubhavam for those who have sought refuge in Her is highlighted by Svami Desikan in verses 71-80. Not only that, Daya



tEnum pAlum neiyum kannalum amutum ottE

Devi stands as the guarantor for devatAntharas, who grant their followers specific benefits, at the appropriate time, in case these devatas cease to exist when the time comes for granting their followers the benefits of their pious acts. Also, when Lord Srinivasa who is inclined to bestow His grace on His supplicants beholds them, He is unable to discern any good act on their part. At that juncture Daya Devi intervenes and highlights the numerous pious acts that they have undertaken knowingly and unknowingly. At the same time, She points out to Lord Srinivasa that these beings have not been rewarded for these acts and thus causes Lord Srinivasa to bestow them with moksham. Thus, this decad of verses documents the mahopakAram rendered by Daya Devi in a myriad of ways culminating in the securing of BrahmAnanda anubhava rasam. In order to be able to offer prostration to Lord Srinivasa and gain Bhagavad anubhavam, the grace of Daya Devi becomes central. Specifically, the sweetness inherent to honey, milk, and sugarcane juice can be readily experienced. However, the taste of amR^itam cannot be readily experienced. In this instance, Daya Devi makes it possible for enjoying the amR^tam known as Lord Srinivasa in keeping with the salutation "tEnum pAlum neiyum kannalum amutum ottE". Thus, this set of ten verses enables one to gain Bhagavad anubhavam. This is made possible entirely due to the compassion of Svami Desikan. The next set of ten verses document Lord Srinivasa's easy accessibility through His numerous avatarams starting with the archa form and then outlining the ten principal avatarams coming about due to the grace of Daya Devi. This set of ten verses corresponding to the ninth decad is set to Prithvi meter."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"This refers to the bliss of Bhakti-dhyana. Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa is in Your eternal embrace. Fortunate people - of course, Prapannas, who now engage in loving meditation as Phala-bhakti (distinct from Bhakti yogam as upAyam) are given to tasting of an ambrosia-flow, unceasing, elevating and mind-warming. Who has granted such a continuous shower? It is Lord Srinivasa, who as the bestower of moksham is guaranteed to redeem these beings at the appropriate time. The Prapannas enjoy the sweet shower. They have been for the past many years longing for this rain, just as the Chataka birds with unfluttering wings, silently taste the ambrosia of the Bhakti mode. This dhyana enjoyment is equivalent to ocular perception of the Lord. So, the prospective blissful beatitude is granted as a preview!"



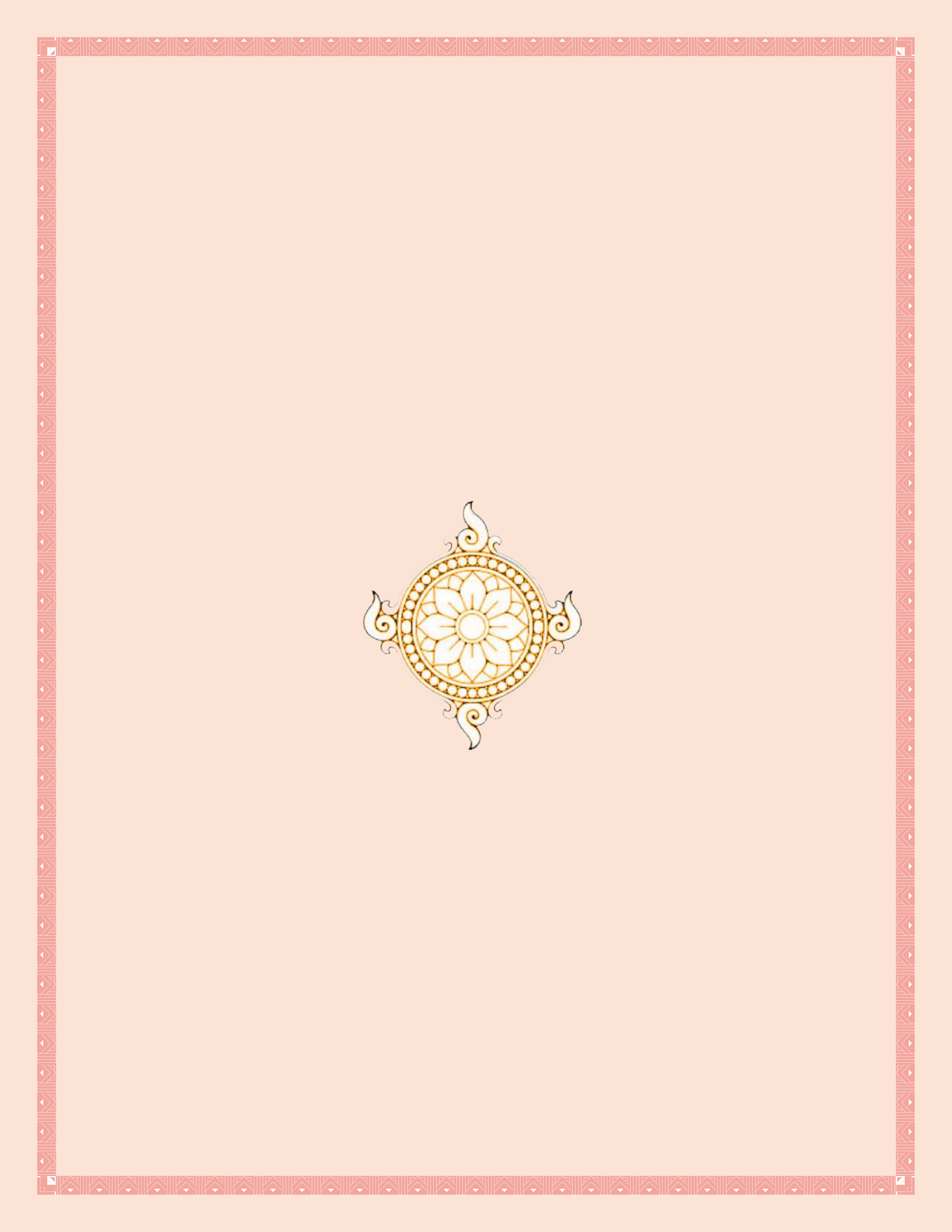

SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 81 – 90)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



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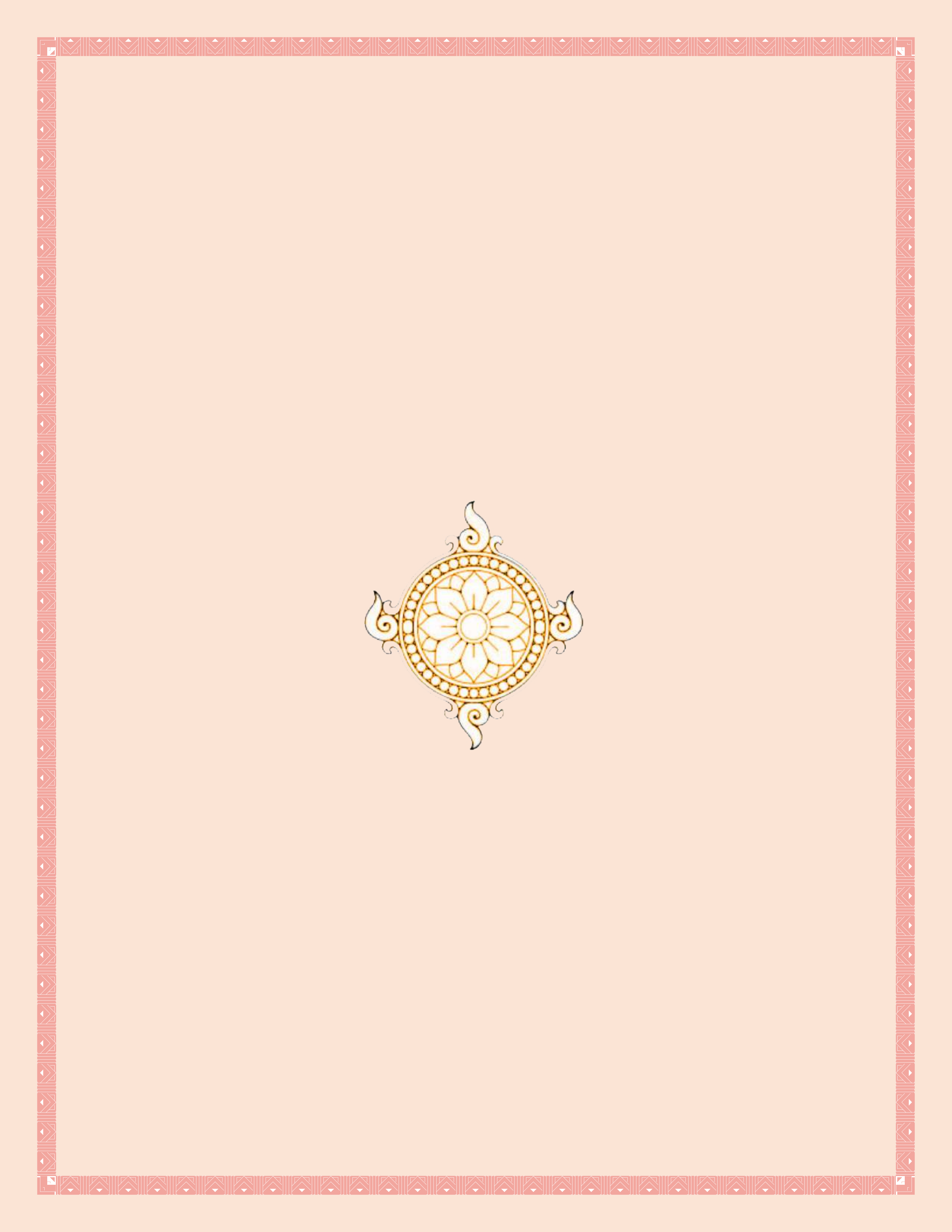
SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

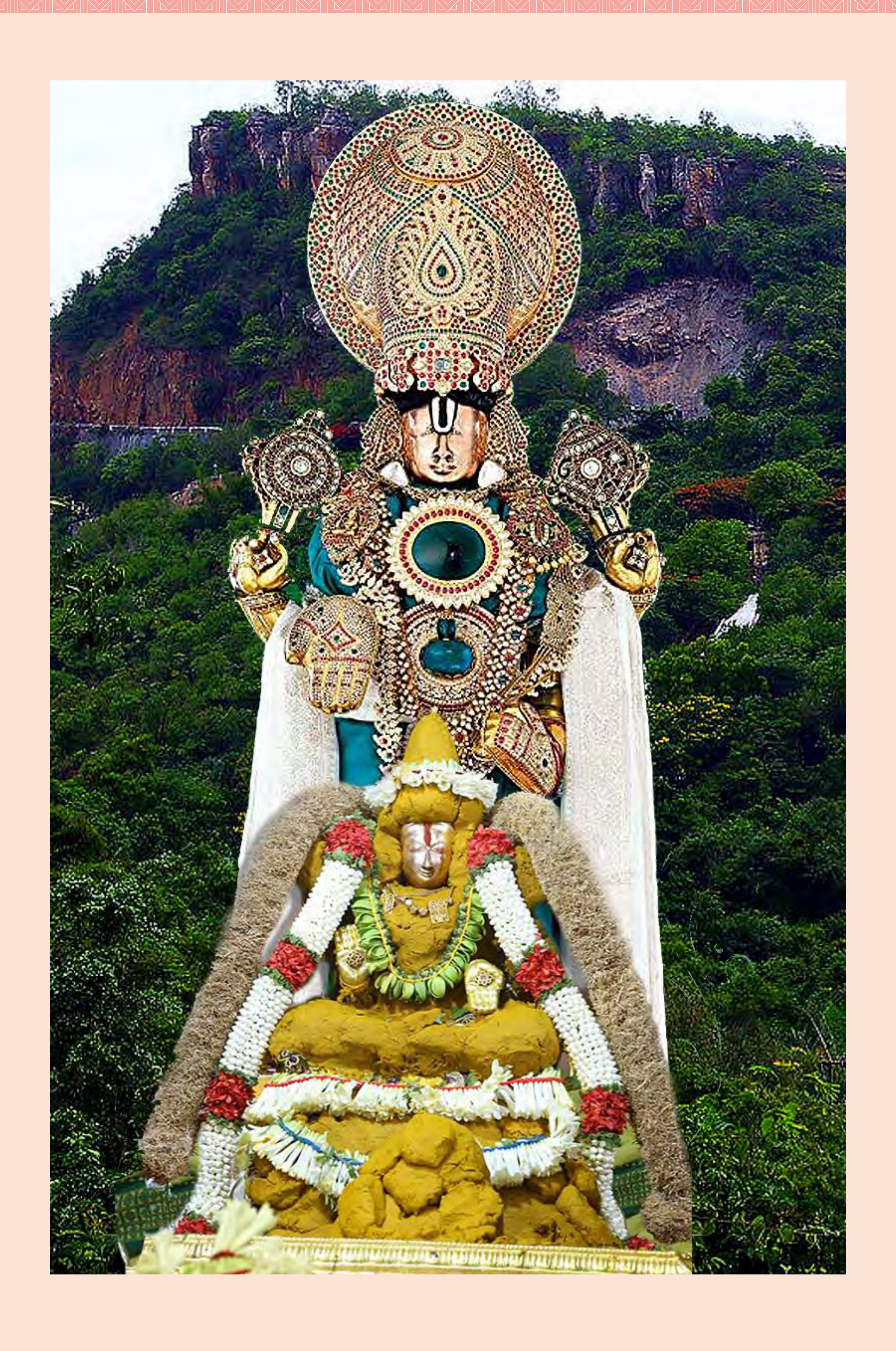


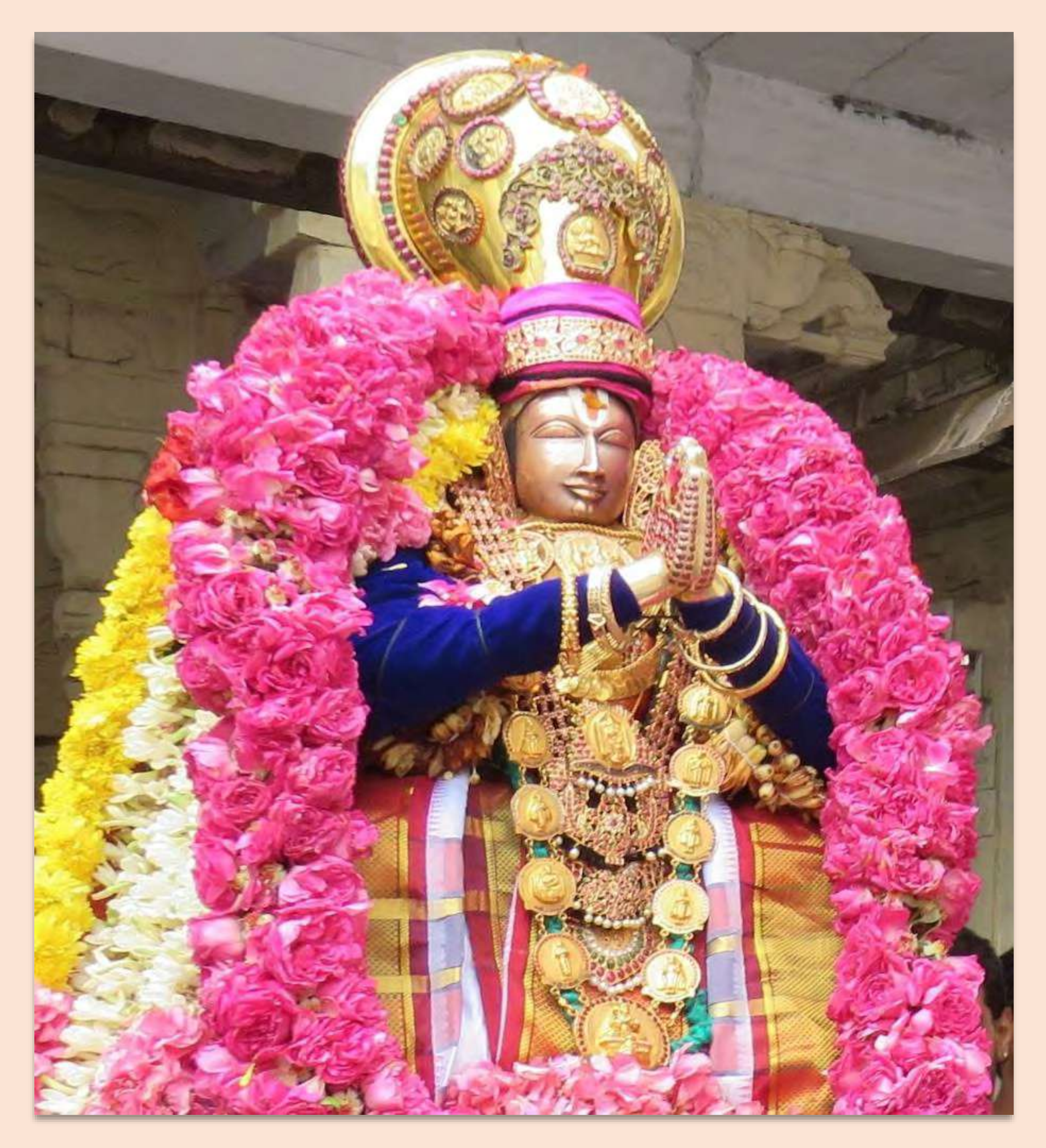
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Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy







SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||

Slokam 81

कृपे विगतवेलया कृत समग्र पोषैस्त्वया

कलिज्वलन दुर्गते जगति काळमेघायितम् ।

वृष क्षिति धरादिषु स्थिति पदेषु सानुप्लवैः

वृषाद्रिपति विग्रहैर्व्यपगताखिलावग्रहैः ॥८१ ॥

kR^ipe vigatavelayA kR^ita samagra poShaistvayA

kali jvalana durgate jagati kALa meghAyitam|

vR^iSha kShiti dharAdiShu sthiti padeShu sAnuplavaiH

vR^iShAdripati vigrahair vyapagatAkhilA vagrahaiH||81



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri.U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

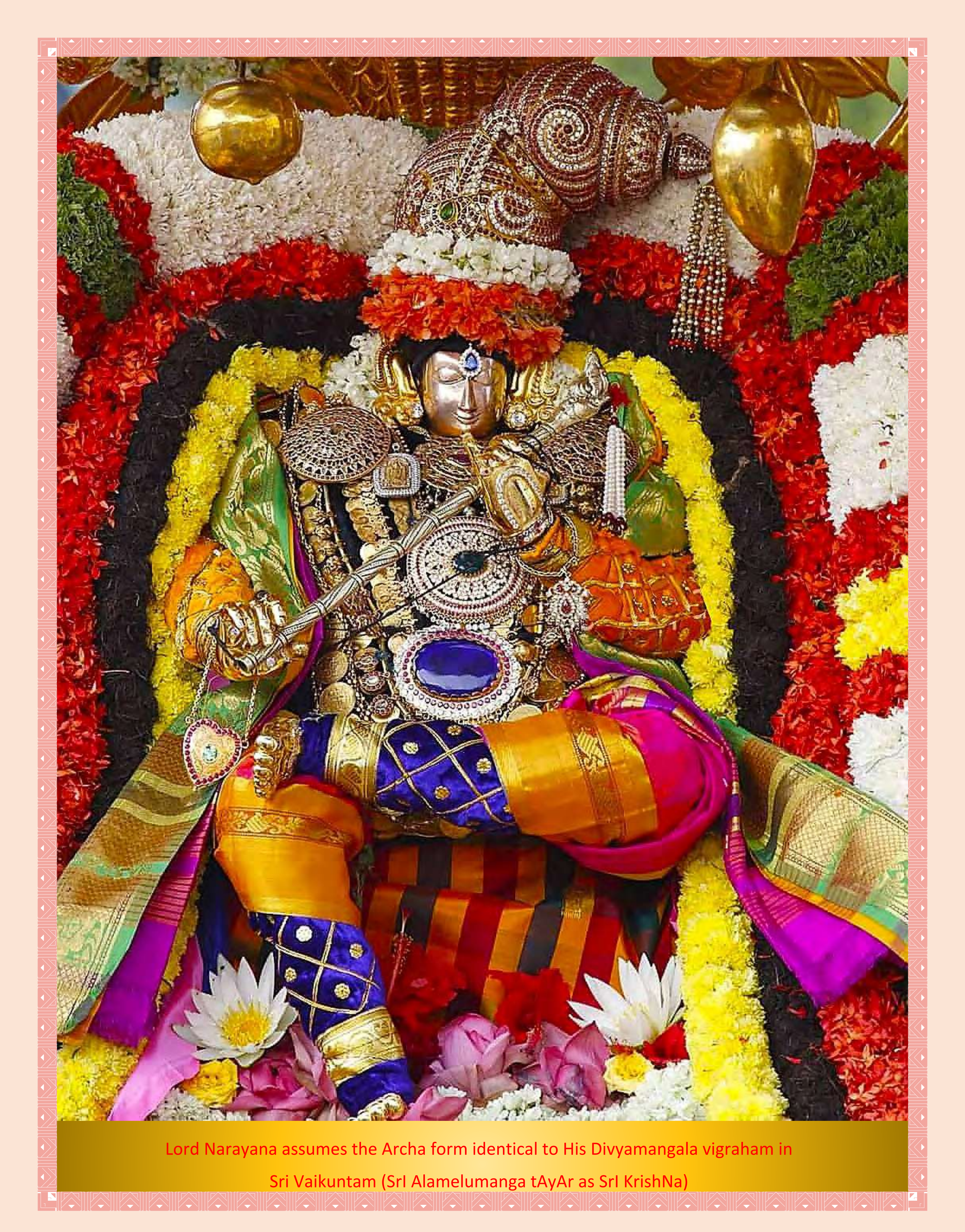
"The next set of ten verses document Lord Srinivasa's easy accessibility through His numerous avatarams starting with the archa form and then outlining the ten principal avatarams coming about due to the efforts of Daya Devi. Moved by the plight of suffering baddha jivans, Daya Devi implores the Lord to undertake the task of redeeming them through His numerous avatarams. This set of ten verses corresponding to the ninth decad is set to Prithvi meter. This meter is so captivating that even if one is unfamiliar with Sanskrit or the meaning of the words underlying the verses, one is naturally drawn towards these verses like a magnet.

This verse is "kR^ipe vigatavelayA kR^ita samagra poShaistvayA kali jvalana durgate jagati kALa meghAyitam vR^iSha kShiti dharAdiShu sthiti padeShu sAnuplavaiH vR^iShAdripati vigrahair vyapagatAkhilA vagrahaiH" The Lord takes on many forms. Each of them is exquisitely beautiful in its own right. The salutation "kR^iShNarupAnyasankheyAni" attests to the fact that in the Krishna avataram alone the Lord assumed countless forms - first as the four-armed one bearing His weapons of the conch and discus, then as a normal child, then as the innocent captivating darling of Yashoda, furthermore displaying the entire universe in His mouth to Yashoda when she was bathing Him, enthralling the Gopikas of Ayarpadi, then after the killing of Kamsa, assuming the form of the four-armed once again. In this manner, Lord Narayana assumes numerous forms. These are countless and immeasurable.



SrI Alamelumanga tAyAr as Navaneetha KrishNa

There is a good reason for him to assume each form. Daya Devi is instrumental for the Lord taking on these numerous forms. Each of the Lord's principal avatarams has a purpose. However, each of these incarnations comes about at the behest of Daya Devi. In the Ramayanam, it is documented "sahapatnyA vishAlAkSha nArAyaNamupAgamat" denoting the fact that Lord Rama along with Sita Devi offered worship to Lord Ranganatha. Lord Rama being an incarnation of Lord Narayana did not have to undertake worship of himself. Given this it may be asked, why then did He do this? It must be understood that this too comes about at the bidding of the Daya Devi. In fact, all the incarnations of Lord Narayana take place at the command of Daya Devi, whose sole aim is the upliftment of the entire universe through the conferring of moksham resulting in the ultimate purushArtham of uninterrupted Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Even the archa avataram, which is superior to the Vibhava avatarams (see explanation in verse 1 for details) comes about due to the effort of Daya Devi. The Poikai Azhvar Mutal tiruvantAti tribute "tamarukantatu evvuruvam avvuruvam tAnE" establishes that exclusively to grace His Bhaktas, Lord Narayana assumes the Archa form identical to His Divyamangala vigraham in Sri Vaikuntam. Thus, He assumes the appropriate archa form with a suitable name.



Lord Narayana assumes the Archa form identical to His Divyamangala vigraham in

Sri Vaikuntam (SrI Alamelumanga tAyAr as SrI KrishNa)



SrI Varadar in SrI Ramar tirukkOlam

Nowhere in the Ramayana is it stated that Lord Rama has four hands. However, in one of the Divya Desams, He is celebrated as Chatur bhuja Ramar. This is solely for the enjoyment of His Bhaktas, who desired to behold this form. As Raja Rama, Lord Rama is always seen with Lakshmana to His right and Sita Devi to His left. However, in order to grace Vibhandaka rishi, the positions of Lakshmana and Sita Devi are reversed in the kshetram of Madhurantakam depicting Him as Bhagavan Rama, whose sole aim is protecting those who have surrendered to Him. In a like manner, Lord Narayana assumes a plethora of forms to satisfy the yearning of His Bhaktas/ Maharishis. Svami Desikan establishes in this verse that the reason for the Lord taking on His numerous incarnations is Daya Devi. The tribute "kR^ipe vigatavelayA kR^ita samagra poShaistvayA" has the Sambodhanam (call

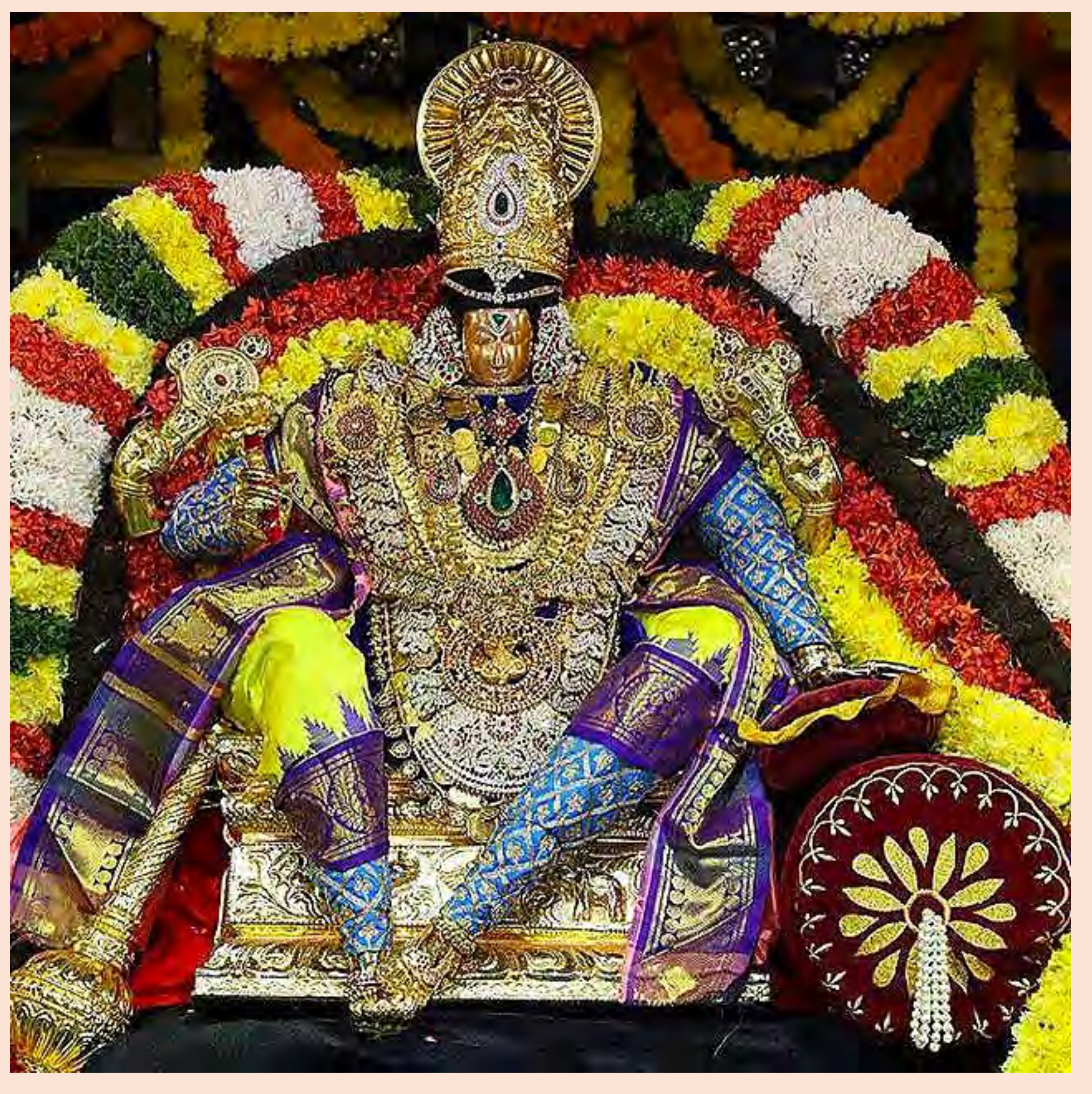
out) “Oh KR^ipe!”. The implication of this tribute is that Daya Devi knows no boundaries, when it comes to realizing Her singular aim of elevating suffering baddha jivans. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi deems it insufficient if Lord Narayana graces beings from His eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntam, or assumes the forms of Rama and Krishna to bless His Bhaktas. Instead Daya Devi causes Him to assume the Archa form, which is existent at all times waiting for the arrival of His Bhaktas to confer His grace.

In the Hastigiri MahAtmyam Svami Desikan declares “vammin pulavIr aruLALa perumAL enRum aruLAzhi ammAn enRum tirumakaLai peRRum en nenjam kOyil koNDa pEr aruLALar enRrum viyappA virutUtum paDi karai puraNDa karuNai kaDalai evvaNNam pEcuvIr Itenna pAnkE”. The tribute “vigatavelayA” from this Daya Satakam verse echoes the same sentiment from the “karai puraNDa karuNai kaDalai” tribute from the Hastigiri mahAtmyam in that the Daya flow of Lord Srinivasa knows no boundaries, when it comes to the task of rescuing those who have sought refuge in Her. The inner meaning of this salutation is that it is one thing for someone to grace one that has engaged in pious acts. However, if the supplicant has committed offenses until the time of surrendering to Daya Devi, with no guarantees of not repeating the same offenses thereafter, it takes an enormous act of forgiveness on Her part to grace these beings. This



PEraruLALan

is the reference to Daya Devi's torrential flow gushing forth without any restrictions or boundaries to grace these beings. A further connection to the Hastigiri mahatmyam salutation "tirumakaLai peRRum en nenjam kOyil koNDa pEr aruLALar" is in order. [The import of this tribute is that Lord Narayana of matchless majesty, resides blissfully in Sri Vaikuntam, and then to afford sevai to devatas incarnates in the serpent bed in the milky ocean. Not only that, to please Vasudeva and Devaki, who had undertaken yeoman efforts of penance, He was born as their son. The Lord of such magnificence has chosen and taken residence in the hearts of the lowliest of beings (aDiyEn). Can there be anyone greater than this Lord who befittingly acquires the name pEr aruLALar?] The reason for this act on the part of Lord Varadaraja is undoubtedly His limitless compassion. This compassion is no different from Srinivasa Daya - Daya Devi. Therefore, the tribute "kR^ipe vigatavelaya" is Svami Desikan's mangalasasanam to Daya Devi.



kR^ipe vigatavelaya! (tAyAr as ParamapadanAthan)



The rain bearing Cloud!

Next, the salutation “kR^ita samagra poShaistvayA” denotes the fact that Daya Devi out of Her concern to rescue all beings in the universe delivers complete protection for them. Again, Lord Srinivasa is described as the rain-bearing cloud in this verse through the glorification “jagati kALa meghAyitam”. Svami Bhashyakarar’s connection to Lord Varadaraja as a rain-bearing cloud comes about in Svami Desikan’s YatirAja Saptati verse 62 “vande taM yaminAM dhurandharamahaM mAnAndhakAradruhA panthAnaM paripanthinAM nijadR^ishA rundhAnamindhAnayA dattaM yena dayA sudhAmbunidhinA pItvA vishuddhaM payaH kAle naH karishailakR^iShNajaladaH kA~NkShAdhikaM varShati”.

The import of this verse is that Lord Varadaraja, who partook of the extremely pure water offered by Svami Bhashyakarar stands on top of the elephant-hill like a rain bearing cloud ready to grant everything that is sought of Him by His bhaktas and then some more. This is further evidenced in Svami Desikan’s TiruchinnamAlai tribute “karutavaram tarum dEva perumAL vantAr”. There needs to be no doubt that the reason for this disposition of Lord Varadaraja is Daya Devi alone. The implied meaning of these tributes is that the ordinary cloud brings about relief from the sweltering summer heat. However, the rain-bearing cloud of Varadaraja standing on top of the elephant-hill, who has received the tIrtha kaimkaryam, sanctified by the touch of Svami Bhashyakarar’s hands, stands ready to deliver supplicants from the heat of the samsara. This is entirely due to the act of Daya Devi. Her anxiety to rush to help suffering baddha jivans results in the manifestation of the Lord as the archa murthy at various Divya Desams. It is also important to remember that Lord Srinivasa too requires “poShaNam” (nourishment). If one examines the Tiruppavai tribute “Azhimazhai kaNNA onRu nI kaikaravEl AzhiyuL pukku mukantu koDArttEri Uzhimutalvan uruvampOl mei karuttu pAzhiyan tOLuDai parpanApan kaiyil AzhipOl minni valampuri pOl ninRatirntu tAzhAtE cArngamutaitta caramazhai pOl vAzha ulakinil peitiDAi nAnkaLum mArkazhi nIrADa makizhntElOr empAvAi” Andal declares that cloud needs to absorb the ocean waters from the middle of the ocean and transform this into a gentle, cool, resurrecting rain. Thus, the ocean serves as the nourishment for the common cloud in this instance. In a like manner, the nourishment for the rain-bearing cloud known as Lord Srinivasa is Daya Devi. Due to Lord Srinivasa being replete with compassion on account of Daya Devi’s eternal presence by His side, Lord Srinivasa is able to redeem suffering jivans of the universe. The Vedam salutation “Apovai sarvA devatAH” denotes the fact that all devatas are present in water.


pashyAmi devAnstava deva dehe

According to the Bhagavadgita salutation “pashyAmi devAnstava deva dehe” (Arjuna was able to behold all the devatas, Brahma, Rudra, Indra et al in the divine form of Lord Krishna), it is clear that Lord Narayana is the antaryami of all Devatas. Thus, the rain-bearing cloud of Srinivasa too is replete with the presence of all Devatas. In the context of the present Daya Satakam verse, the rain-bearing cloud of Lord Srinivasa replete with all the devatas in His divine form derives nourishment from Daya Devi. Daya Devi’s singular purpose is the redemption of all beings of the universe without distinction of any kind. For example, in the Rama avataram all sentient and insentient beings of Ayodhya gained moksham. However, that was restricted only to those beings who were fortunate to be associated with Lord Rama during the time of His incarnation. What about others who were not similarly fortunate? It is only for their redemption that Daya Devi caused the Lord to take on the form of the Archa murtis at various Divya Desams. The complete nourishment/protection afforded by Daya Devi as described in the “kR^ita samagra poShaistvayA” tribute knows no obstacles as attested to by the tribute “vyapagatAkhilA vagrahaiH” of this Daya Satakam verse.

For example, rain-bearing clouds may be present in a given region. Just when the anticipation of rain comes about, the cloud can be blown away by the wind. In a like fashion, one is anticipating that Lord Srinivasa (the rain-bearing cloud) would confer His grace. However, obstacles could come in the way precluding this act. What could possibly come in the way of securing the grace of Lord Srinivasa? It is the sin-pile accumulated over aeons due to willful and repeated transgressions committed by the jivan. This is documented in the salutation “Aj~nA cChedI mama drohi”. This makes one the receptacle of Lord Srinivasa’s nigraha sankalpam (punishment). However, Daya Devi intervenes in a timely manner to ruthlessly remove all obstacles that come in the way of the jivan receiving Lord Srinivasa’s grace, in keeping with the YatirAja Saptati salutation “anugrahamayIM vande nityaM aj~nAta nigraham”. This implies that the term nigraham is non-existent in Thayar’s dictionary. She only knows anugraham. Thus, even if the Lord for a moment, upon viewing the sin-pile of the jivan, ponders over the course of punishment to be meted out, Daya Devi instantaneously transforms the nigraha sankalpam to one of anugraham. This is the import of the “vyapagatAkhilA vagrahaiH” glorification of this Daya Satakam verse.

The salutation “vR^iSha kShiti dharAdiShu sthiti padeShu sAnuplavaiH” denotes the fact that Daya Devi functions in this manner at places like the Venkatam hill. This is meant to imply that wherever the archa murti of the Lord is present, Daya Devi renders Her support by destroying the sin-pile of supplicants

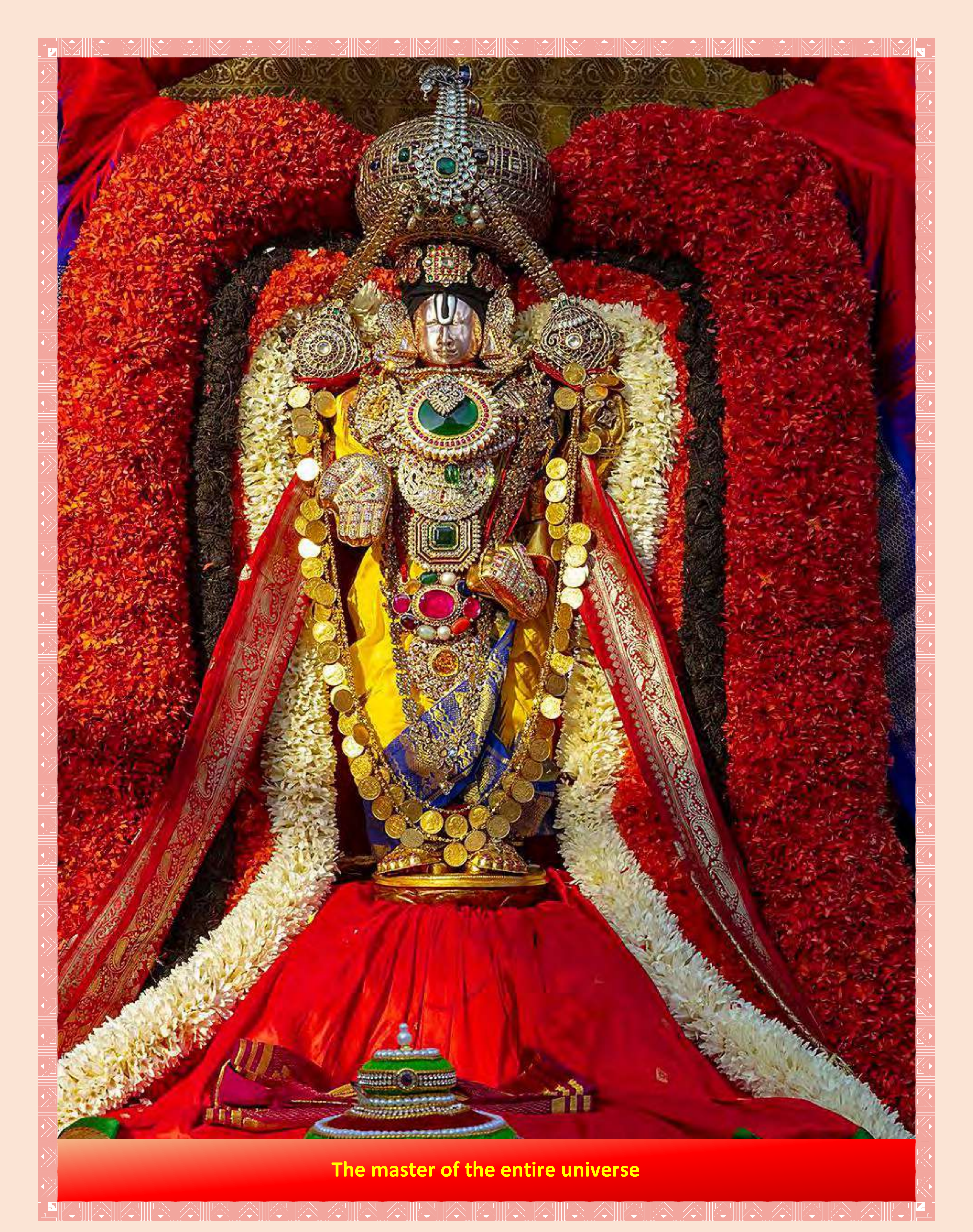

The Rain Bearing Cloud

and make them fitting receptacles for the grace of the Archa murti. Thus, it must be remembered that the Archa murti in various Divya Desams is none other than Lord Srinivasa and that it is only on account of the extreme compassion of Daya Devi that He has arrived in those Divya Desams exclusively for the purpose of gracing His supplicants. This is documented in the salutation "kalau ve~NkaTanAyakaH". The prominent deity for kali yugam is Lord Srinivasa. In the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "ceiya tAmarai kaNNanAy ulakEzhum uNDa avan kaNDIr vaiyam vAnam manicar teivam maRRum maRRum maRRum muRRumAi ceiya cUzh cuDar j~nAnamAi veLi paTTivai paDaittAn pinnum moi koL cOtiyODAyinAn oru mUvar Akiya mUrtiyE" Svami NammAzhvar documents the glory of the Archa avataram. The cause for the archa avataram is Daya Devi. The glory of the Archa murti lies in the fact that the Lord has arrived to redeem those who may have gone astray due to their prior Karma. So overwhelming is the compassion of Daya Devi that even Ravana, who uttered outrageous words to Sita Devi to adorn his inner apartments, was advised to befriend Lord Rama. This is documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "mitramaupayikaM kartuM rAmaH

sthAnaM parIpsatA tena maItrI bhavatu te yadi jIvitumicchasi". It is only to ensure all beings become privy to His grace does the Lord undertake the avataram in archa form. The Azhvar tribute is meant to assure those who may deem themselves to be unworthy of the Lord's grace on account of their enormous sin-pile. The message of re-assurance from the Azhvar tribute is in the form "Fear not. The Lord is Purushottama. He incarnates solely for the purpose of redeeming even the greatest of sinners." From the perspective of the supplicants, they have no knowledge of the Lord's DivyAtma svarUpam or His innumerable auspicious qualities. This is their only drawback. However, the Lord makes light of this fact and due to His saulabhyam (easy accessibility), demonstrates that He is ready to redeem them and confers His grace. It is insufficient to merely view the Lord as Ishvara - the master of the entire universe. In addition, He must be viewed as the master of the universe, who is easily accessible and showers His grace on the worst of sinners.

Not only that, as the archa murti, He is archaka pAradhInan - bound by the archakas. The sole reason for this disposition of the Lord as the Archa murti is Daya Devi. Thus, it is established that on account of Daya Devi, Lord Srinivasa assumes the form the Archa murtis at various Divya Desams to ensure His easy accessibility and shower His grace on all supplicants. It must be noted here that Svami Desikan highlights the superiority of the Archa murti over all other forms due to the easy accessibility and hence documents this fact at the outset in this decad before glorifying the other avatarams. This is not only restricted to the Divya Desams but to all temples where the Lord is in Archa form. This is not restricted to the Venkatam hill but is applicable to temples worldwide.

Since this upanyasam is taking place on a dvadashi day, aDiyEn will also highlight a few aspects pertaining to the significance of dvAdashi. First off it is a misconception that Dvadashi is meant only for those who observe Ekadashi vratam. The two are separate. Ekadashi calls for fasting on that day, which is quite different from the dvadashi vratam that needs to be observed. It is also not true that only those who observe Ekadashi vratam have to break the fast through dvadashi pAraNai within the prescribed time. Instead, the sastram states that regardless of whether or not one is able to observe the Ekadashi vratam (let's say one is unable to observe for a variety of reasons and partakes of laghu AhAram on Ekadashi day), the dvadashi paraNai needs to be done before the prescribed time. Even if the day is alpa dvadashi, where the dvadashi tithi prevails for only a short while, if the paraNai is not performed prior to the expiry of Dvadashi, one loses the benefit of performing twelve Dvadashi vratams.



The master of the entire universe

Furthermore, the first quarter of Dvadashi according to the Sastras must be observed just like Ekadashi without partaking any food. This time is known as Hari VAsaram. Only after the Hari VAsaram is over can pAraNai be undertaken. Another visesham for Dvadashi is that this is the thithi for Lord Narayana. The nakshatram of Shravanam is sacred for Lord Vishnu and it is recommended that fasting be undertaken on this nakshatram. However, when it comes to the dvadashi tithi, the Sastraic instruction is to partake of food early in the day. Here it is instructive to recall the story of Ambarisha, an ancestor of Lord Rama, who was an extremely great Bhagavata. The SrImad BhAgavatam glorifies Ambarisha in the verse "sa vai manaH KR^iShNapadAravindayorvachAMsi vaikuNTha guNanuvarNan karau harErmandiramArjanAdiShu shR^itiM cakArAcyuta satkathodaye". His mind was singularly focused on dhyanam of the feet of Lord Krishna as documented in the salutation "sa vai manaH KR^iShNapadAravindayoH" The tribute "vachAMsi vaikuNTha guNanuvarNan" documents the fact that his speech was exclusively devoted to singing the glory of the Lord's kalyANa guNams and the greatness of His supreme abode - Sri Vaikuntam. The glorification "karau harErmandiramArjanAdiShu" attests to the fact that he put his hands to use for kaimkaryam of Lord Hari by way of cleaning up Temples and the like. The salutation "shR^itiM cakArAcyuta satkathodaye" denotes the fact that his ears were forever tuned to those rendering the praise and singing the glory of Lord Achyuta. The tribute "mukundali~NgAlaya darshane dR^ishau" attests to the fact that Ambarisha's eyes were trained to behold only the temples and gopurams of Lord Mukunda, while the tribute "tadbhR^itya gAtra-sparshe(a)~Nga sa~Ngamam" documents the fact that Ambarisha took delight in the embrace of Bhagavatas. The glorification "shrImat tulasyA rasanAM tadarpite" documents the fact that his nose only sought the delectable fragrance of Tulasi that adorned Lord Narayana. The salutation "pAdau hareH kShetra padAnusarpaNE shiro hR^iShikesha padAbhivandane" attests to the fact that Ambarisha put his feet to use to travel to the kshetrams where Lord Narayana was in residence so that he could offer prostrations and used his head exclusively for bowing to the feet of Lord Narayana. The tribute "kAmaM ca dAsye na tu kAmakAmyayA yatotthama shloka janAshrayA ratiH" documents the fact that Ambarisha's sole intent was to be of service to Lord Narayana and therefore he was hailed universally. He observed dvadashi vratam for twelve years continuously in strict accordance with the sastras and during the kartikai mAsam Kaishika Dvadashi, he undertook the special celebration of a feast where he performed the feeding of a large number of Brahmins after which he was getting ready to do pAraNai. At that juncture, there came about a major test of his

resolve through the arrival of Durvasa Maharishi, who was known to be short tempered. Only a short time prevailed before the end of the auspicious period of dvadashi for partaking of food. Durvasa Maharishi informed Ambarisha that he will partake of food after completing his ritual snanam in the Yamuna river. However, the Rishi took a long time to perform his snanam and the end of the auspicious period of Dvadashi was rapidly nearing. On the one hand breaking the fast before feeding the Brahmana guest would incur grave sin. On the other-hand not partaking of food before the end of the auspicious period would cause Ambarisha to lose all the benefit gained by following the Dvadashi vratam for the previous twelve occasions. This was truly a dilemma that confronted Ambarisha. He gathered all the Bhagavatas and posed the question about what to do to resolve this situation. This is documented in the tribute "muhUrtArdhAvashiShTAyAM dvAdashyAM pAraNaM prati cintayAmAsa dharmaj~no dvijaistaddharma sa~NkaTe". This was truly a Dharma sankatam. The Bhagavatas collectively came up with the idea that Ambarisha undertake jala pAraNai with the recitation of the appropriate mantram. This is equivalent to performing the pAraNai as well as not performing the pAraNai. This is documented in the verse "brAhmaNAtikrame doSho dvAdashyAM yadapAraNe yat kR^itvA sAdhu me bhUyAdadharmo vA na mAM spR^ishEt ambhasA kevalenAtha kariShye vrata pAraNam AhurabbhakShaNaM viprA hyashitaM nAshitaM ca tat". Shortly after Ambarisha completed jala paraNai, Durvasa arrived and was enraged to discover this fact. The subsequent events of Durvasa creating a fiend from his matted locks to destroy Ambarisha and the protection afforded by the Lord's Sudarshana chakram to Ambarisha first by destroying the fiend and then relentlessly pursuing Durvasa wherever he went (Brahma, Rudra, and Lord Narayana himself could not offer relief) until he sought forgiveness from Ambarisha are a different matter. The focus here is on the dvadashi vratam. Now we return to the exposition of verse 81 of the Daya Satakam.

This decad of ten verses highlights the glory of the ten prinicipal avatarams of Lord Narayana. However, it is solely to illustrate the superiority of the Archa form over the Vibhava avatarams corresponding to the ten principal avatarams, Svami Desikan glorifies the Archa form at the outset. First and foremost, Lord Srinivasa takes numerous incarnations at the behest of Daya Devi for the sole purpose of redeeming errant jivans in the universe. The ocean of mercy that is represented by Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to incarnate as the Archa murti, giving up residence in Sri Vaikuntam. All water bodies have boundaries beyond which they do not flow.


May the torrential flow of nectarine Daya flowing from Lord Srinivasa bless us all!

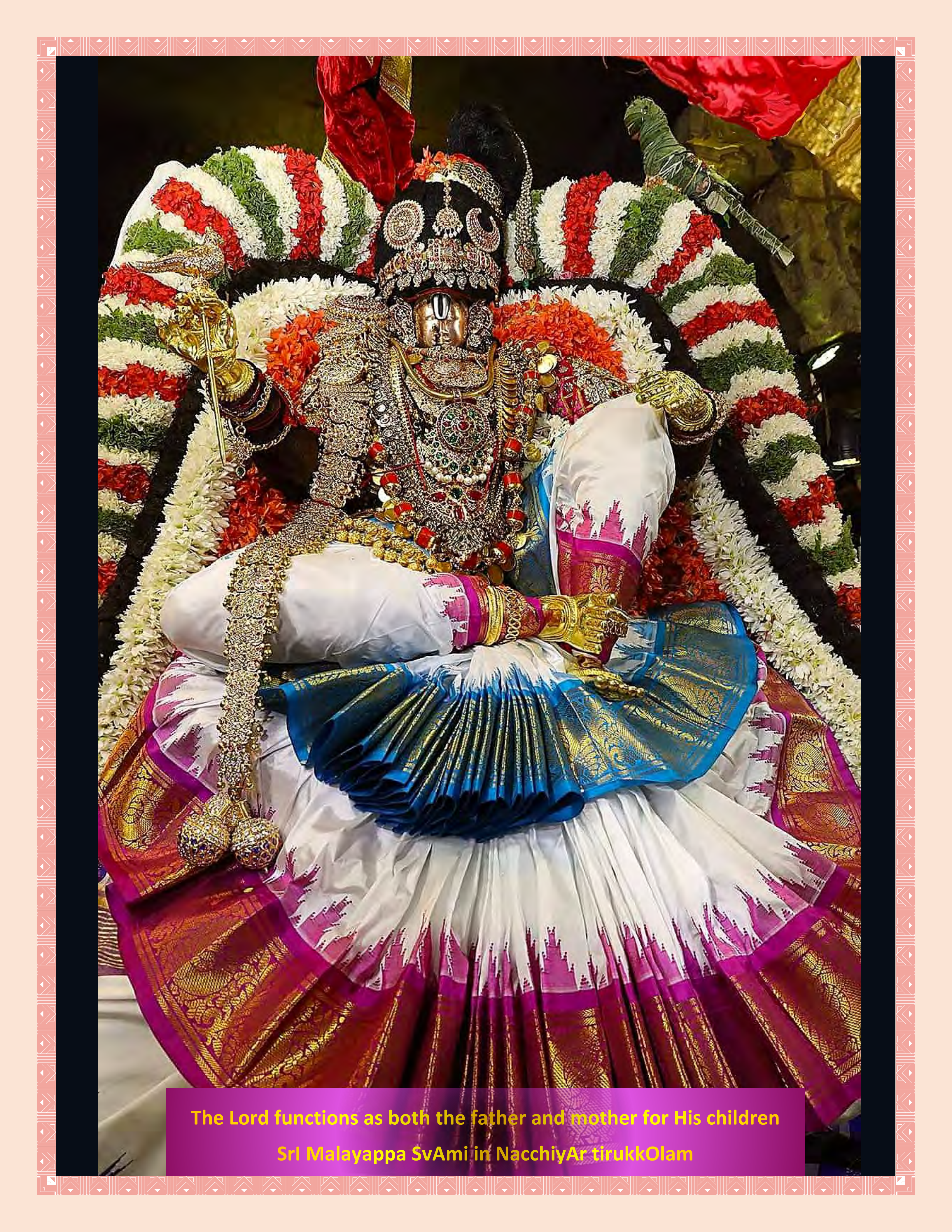
However, the tribute "kR^ipe vigatavelayA" describes the fact that the ocean of Daya Devi knows no such barriers. Two possibilities arise in this context - either the ocean of Daya Devi has no barriers or that She crosses any boundaries that may seemingly restrict Her flow. Lord Srinivasa is described in the Chandogya Upanishad as "apahatapApma". This can give rise to a misleading interpretation that the Lord too was affected by sin which was later destroyed. However, this is not the meaning of the term "apahatapApma". Instead, it means that one who is unaffected by sin - one near whom there cannot be any trace of sin. Similarly in this context the salutation "vigatavelayA" denotes the fact that there are no barriers for the Daya flow. Her flow is not restricted to a handful of people. Instead, Her motto is to redeem all beings of the universe. For example, in the Nrusimha avataram protection was afforded to Prahlada. In the Trivikrama avataram, the Lord graced Bali and Indra along with the other devas. Thus, the protection in these avatarams was restricted to a select few. On the other hand, the overbearing concern of Daya Devi to redeem all beings of the universe causes Her to instruct Lord Srinivasa to take root as the Archa murti in various Divya Desams such as Tiruvenkatam. Thus, Svami Desikan uses an analogy to describe the superiority of the Archa avataram in this instance. Specifically, he alludes to the fact that just as a rain bearing cloud holds nothing back and empties all the water at a given place, Lord Srinivasa too functions as the rain-bearing cloud that graces all beings with unmitigated Daya flow. This is the import of the "jagati kALa meghAyitam" tribute. Beholding the rain-bearing cloud of Lord Srinivasa brings about great joy to all beings of the universe. This joy comes about to all beings without distinction of any kind on the basis of humans, beasts, educated, illiterate, wealthy, poor, men, women, and children. All beings eagerly look forward to the rainfall of Daya flow from the cloud known as Lord Srinivasa just like the earth looks forward to the nourishment of rain for crop growth. However, the common rain-bearing cloud can easily be scattered by the wind.

In this case expectant folks would be deprived of rainfall. Sri Tirukacchi Nambi in the DevarAja aShTakam requests Lord Varadaraja to shower His grace through the tribute "tvadIkShaNa sudhAsindhuvIcivikShepashikaraiH kAruNyamARutAnItaiH shIthalairabhiShinca mAm". In this tribute Sri Tirukacchi Nambi refers to the divine kataksham of Lord Varadaraja as the nectarine shower of Daya and seeks to be blessed with this shower. Even a drop of this shower is sufficient for elevation is the considered position of Sri Tirukacchi Nambi. On the other hand, it is not a drop of the shower arising from a momentary glance of Lord Srinivasa but the torrential flow arising from His entire gaze that is made possible

by Daya Devi for all beings of the universe by causing Him to take root at the Venkatam hill. What is the greatness of the Archa avataram? Svami Desikan answers this in the tribute "surUpAM pratimAM viShNoH prasanna vadane kShaNAM kR^itvAtmanaH prItikarIM suvarNarajatAdibhiH tAM arcayet tAM praNamet tAM yajet tAM vicintayet nishatyapAsta doShastu tAmeva abrahmarUpiNIm". "sarUpAm pratimAm viShNoH" denotes the fact that Lord ViShNu's form as the Archa murti is beautiful to behold. If one sees the Archa murti, a pleasant smile on His face can be discerned according to the tribute "prasanna vadane kShaNAm". This smile on the face of Lord Srinivasa seems to suggest "Welcome to My shrine. It is only for your sake that I have taken root here giving up residence in Sri Vaikuntam." Svami Kulashekara Azhvar expresses his adoration for Lord Srinivasa through the tribute "paDiyAi kiDantu un pavaLavAi kANbEnE" This attests to the Azhvar's desire to behold the captivating smile on the lips of Lord Srinivasa, which serves as the nectarine elixir. The smile is so captivating that one can never have enough of it no matter how long one is allowed to enjoy this. The salutation "kR^itvAtmanaH prItikarIM suvarNarajatAdibhiH" denotes the fact that such the divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa brings about great joy to Bhaktas as if it is a mirror image of the Lord at Sri Vaikuntam. The implication here is that the vigraham is either made of gold, gold dust, or pancha-loha or in shila form (carved from stone) or made from wood. If one visits Tiruvananthapuram, one can see the Utsava murti made in gold. In Tirukoshtiyur, the utsavar vigraham is rajatha mayam. Elsewhere, the utsavar vigraham can be seen in Panchaloham form. In other places, the mulavar can be seen as being carved from stone, or wood and in some cases as the Salagrama murti. Lord Varadaraja was in the form of dhAru murti (made from wood). In this manner the Lord manifests in various Divya Desams for the enjoyment of His Bhaktas. The tribute "tAM arcayet tAM praNamet tAM yajet tAM vicintayet" denotes the fact that the Archa murti manifesting in the above manner is worshipped through the offering of flowers, saluted respectfully, pleased through the performance of yaj~nas or becomes the object of ceaseless contemplation. One who engages in worshipping the Lord in this manner, is relieved of all sins and attains the form of Brahman. This is attested to by the tribute "nishatyapAsta doShastu tAmeva abrahmarUpiNIm".

The greatness of the Archa avataram is documented in Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "tanjamAkiya tantai tAyoDu tAnumAi avai allanAi encalil amarar kulamutal mUvar tammuLLum Atiyai anci nIr ulakattuLIrkaL avan ivan enRu kUzhenmin nencinAl ninaippAn yavan avan Akum nIl kaDal vaNNanE". (He resides in Sri VaikuNtam as sarvaj~nan, sarveshvaran, sarva shaktan, as vibhu. He is

omnipresent. He is also resident as the indweller of all beings in the universe. However, these usages fail to bring home to a commoner the elevated essential nature, beautiful form and elevated auspicious qualities of the Lord. It is impossible to perceive Lord Narayana directly as described by the Ashtakshara mantra dhyana shlokam except for the residents of Sri Vaikuntam. How then could a commoner experience Lord Narayana? Swamy NammAzhwar assures them that they can visualize Lord Narayana as they please. For example, if they wish to worship Him as Lord Rama, Krishna, or Narasimha, they are at complete liberty to do so. Even there too if they desire to behold the Lord as Kodanda Rama or Pattabhirama, Bala Krishna, Navanitha Krishna, or the Govardhana Giridhari, Yoga Nrusimha or Lakshminrusimha, they can readily do this through the Archa form. If they adopt this mode of worship, they are guaranteed to be rid of their sins and will attain Lord Narayana in due course.) The tribute "tanjamAkiya tantai tAyoDu" attests to the fact that one's parents no doubt love their offspring but their ability to protect the children can be limited. For example, if an astrologer declares that the child was born at an inopportune time, the parents would tend to blame the child for every bad occurrence in the family. However, one who has the well-being of His children all the time and stands ready to offer His protection is Lord Narayana alone. No matter what, He never forsakes His children in keeping with the tribute "lokAnAm avyayaH pitAH" In this case the Lord functions as both the father and mother for His children. Another tribute that documents this is "sarveshAm lokAnAm pitamAtA ca mAdhavaH". One can function as the father or mother for one's children according to their assigned stature. However, the Lord functions as both the father and mother as well as all forms of relatives for His children. He is the primordial chief of the Nitya suris, who inhabit Sri Vaikuntam. These beings have the sole objective of ceaseless kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. He functions as the indweller for devatas such as Brahma and Rudra. How is it possible for lowly ones like us to offer prostration to the Lord of such majesty? It is solely for this purpose that the Lord has incarnated as the Divya mangala vigraha archa murti at various Divya Desams. If one develops Bhakti for this Archa murti and offers worship to the Lord, He is guaranteed to grace them. Following the lead of the Azhvar, Svami Desikan therefore at the outset in this decad highlights the superiority of the Archa form of Lord Srinivasa over all other forms. The tribute "kali jvalana durgate jagati kALa meghAyitam" documents the fact that for those tormented by the heat arising on account of Kaliyugam, Lord Srinivasa functions as the gentle rain-bearing cloud, bringing instant relief. It is important to note that the heat arising from Kali is unbearable.



The Lord functions as both the father and mother for His children

SrI Malayappa SvAmi in NacchiyAr tirukkOlam

It is well known that fire reduces everything that comes in contact with it to ashes. In this case, for suffering jivans caught up in the fire of Kali, they forget their essential nature - one of complete subservience to Lord Narayana; one's existence and activities are solely at the command of Lord Narayana and carried out entirely for His pleasure. The fire of Kali destroys knowledge of one's essential nature of functioning as the dAsa-bhUtas of Lord Narayana, who is their master/controller. This knowledge is known as svAmi-dAsa bhUta sambandham. This causes all beings to lose out on Bhagavad Kaimkaryam as a result. Due to the overbearing concern of Daya Devi, Lord Srinivasa incarnates as the Archa murti at the Venkatam hill, who functions as the rain-bearing cloud, in order to restore the svarUpa j~nAnam for beings tormented by the heat of Kali. It is not only at the Venkatam hill but all other Divya Desams. The inner meaning is that without the Kataksham of Lord Srinivasa/Daya Devi, there is a sense of incompleteness at all Divya Desams. Only with this Kataksham do the other Divya Desams attain fulfillment. Thus, the Daya of Lord Srinivasa permeates at all Divya Desams.



SrI SundarabAhu

Sri Kuresha in the SundarabAhu sthavam offers a moving tribute to Lord Azhagar of Tirumaliruncholai in the verse "vij~nApanAM vanagirIshvara! satyarUpAm a~NgIkuruShva karuNArNava! mAmakInAm shrIra~Nga dhAmani yathA purameSha so(a)haM rAmAnujArya vashagaH parivartiShIya" It must be noted that at this time due to the cruelty of the Chola king Krimi Kanta, Sri Kuresha lost his eyesight. In this tribute, he asks not for restoration of his eyesight. Instead, he seeks that the Divya Deham of Srirangam must be restored to its pristine glory and that he should be blessed only with the association with Svami Bhashyakarar, for whom he desired to render kaimkaryam. Here Sri Kuresha appeals to Lord Azhagar, who never turns down any request from His Bhaktas at any cost. One who is known to grant everything sought by His Bhaktas is Lord Varadaraja according to the tribute "karutavaram

tarum dEva perumAL vantAr". Sri Kuresha submits his appeal to Lord Azhagar visualizing Him as Lord Varadaraja in this instance and requests that Sriranga Sri should experience no decline of any kind. The inner meaning of this tribute is that in accordance with the tribute "sarvadesha dashakAleshvavyAhata parAkramA rAmanujArya divyAj~nA vardhatAm abhivardhatAm", the Divine command of Bhagavad Bhashyakarar must flourish at all Divya Desams, even though it is only mentioned explicitly in terms of Srirangam. Following the lead of Sri Kuresha, Svami Desikan declares in this Daya Satakam verse that it is entirely on account of Daya Devi's grace that Lord Srinivasa takes root as the Archa murtiat various Divya Desams.

It must be further noted from the "vR^iSha kShiti dharAdiShu sthiti padeShu sAnuplavaiH" salutation of this Daya Satakam verse that Lord Srinivasa does not incarnate alone as the Archa murti at various Divya Desams. He is accompanied by His entire retinue of ubhaya nAcchiyArs (Sri Devi, Bhu Devi, Neela Devi), Ananta, Garuda, Vishvaksena et al. In years gone by Ananta, Garuda, Vishvaksena, would be seen en route to the Garbha gruham at the Venkatam hill. Now, they are in the prakaram. The incarnation of Lord Srinivasa as the Archa murti at the Venkatam hill as well as at other Divya Desams has been brought about by Daya Devi as documented in the tribute "vR^iShAdripati vigrahair vyapagatAkhilA vagrahaiH".

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svami:

"Oh Daya Devi! You are boundless; Your flow transgresses all banks and boundaries. What You do to us in this world is matchless:

1. You provide a sustained timely cloud that feeds and promotes the entire earth and its beings, when in the Kali age of extreme heat and pestilence, this cloud-service is very welcome. The clouds are accompanied and assisted by wind, thunder, and lightning. All impediments such as unfavorable planetary position are removed. The whole world rejoices from the cloud conferment.

2. You provide in Tirumalai and some other hill-tops and in many shrines, the deity of Srinivasa with His paraphernalia of attendants and retinue (Garuda, Nityasuris, Azhwars, Acharyas' idols). They all work together to provide spiritual sustenance. They confer only blessings and no punishments as in Vibhava avatara. This is also a cloud provision.

3. In summary, what a great service You have rendered! This earth benefits from this two-fold megha benediction. This is Your great gift of Daya Devi!

Slokam 82

प्रसूय विविधं जगत् तदभिवृद्धये त्वं दये
समीक्षण विचिन्तन प्रभृतिभिः स्वयं तादृशैः ।
विचित्र गुण चित्रितां विविध दोष वैदेशिकीं
वृषाचलपतेस्तनुं विशसि मत्स्यकूर्मादिकाम् ॥८२

prasUya vividhaM jagat tadabhi vR^iddhaye tvaM daye
samIkShaNa vicintana prabhR^itibhiH svayaM tAdR^ishaiH|
vicitra guNa citritAM vividha doSha vaideshikIM
vR^iShAcalapateH tanuM vishasi matsya kUrmAdikAm||82



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "prasUya vividhaM jagat tadabhi vR^iddhaye tvaM daye samIkShaNa vicintana prabhR^itibhiH svayaM tAdR^ishaiH vicitra guNa citritAM vividha doSha vaideshikIM vR^iShAcalapateH tanuM vishasi matsya kUrmAdikAm". The previous verse is reflective of Lord Srinivasa, unable to bear the weight of the Daya cloud replete with water, liberally provides copious rainfall. The point of note here is that Svami Desikan has devoted this decad to the glorification of Daya Devi in the context of Lord Srinivasa's principal avatarams. With the opening verse devoted to the Archa avataram, Svami Desikan is now left with nine verses to glorify the ten principal avatarams. Therefore, Svami Desikan uses this verse to describe two avatarams with each of the remaining verses devoted to glorification of one avataram. An important point to be noted pertaining to the superiority of the Archa form over all other forms, is the fact that the Lord as the Archa murti can be readily seen with one's eyes and allows for offering prostrations directly. He can be enjoyed in a plethora of ways such as holding on the shoulders during utsavams, offering of various upacharams during nitya tiruvaradhanam, taking Him on a procession through the streets, seating Him in a swing enjoying dolotsavam, and the like. It is also possible to enjoy the Archa form in paryanka asanam. Not only that we can perform Atma samarpaNam in His presence by way of sharaNAgati making us kruta krutyas. Also engaging in kaimkaryam for the Archa murti upon performance of sharaNAgati renders us as krutArthas.



Daya Devi is the Mother of the Universe

However, vibhava avatarams such as Rama, Krishna, and Narasimha could only be perceived by those who were fortunate to be born during the time of those avatarams. The tribute "prasUya vividhaM jagat tadabhi vR^iddhaye tvaM daye" from this verse denotes the fact that Daya Devi is the Mother of the universe. This universe is of many kinds. That is, it includes Deva lokam, the earth and many other such lokams. Daya Devi is responsible for the creation of all of these lokams. It is insufficient to merely engage in the act of creation. Sustenance of these lokams replete with millions of sentient and insentient beings becomes a daunting task. A mother gives birth to her child out of an act of extreme concern and love for the child. This manifests in Her attention to every aspect of the care, nourishment, development, and elevation of the child. It is not out of the selfish motive that the child will care for her in her old age. In a like manner, Daya Devi engages in the act of srushti - creation of the entire universe with its sentient and insentient beings entirely for the purpose of protecting and elevating these beings. The slokam

“vicitrA deha sampatti: ishvarAya niveditum |pUrvameva kR^itA brahman hastapAdati sayyudA ||” attests to the fact that this body with its features like hands and legs was designed to be used as an instrument and an offering to the supreme Lord, Narayana. The inner meaning is that the Atma, which is self-illuminating, endowed with human form, and possessing sense organs is undoubtedly the property of Lord Narayana. The very purpose of this creation by Daya Devi is to ensure that the jivan puts these sense organs to use in service of Lord Narayana and performs surrender to Lord Narayana. This has been highlighted in a verse 17 of Daya Satakam through the salutation “acidavishiShTAn praLayE jantUn avalokya jAta nirvedA”. That is, the jivan existing in an inert state during the time of PraLayam is viewed by Daya Devi with extreme compassion and with the intent that if afforded another lifetime, endowed with sense organs, the jivan will put them to proper use and resort to sharaNAgati for redemption. In this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan affirms that the sole purpose of creating these sentient beings endowed with arms, legs and other sense organs is for ensuring their elevation and redemption through sharaNAgati for Lord Narayana. This is the import of the salutation “tadabhi vR^iddhaye tvaM daye”.

What then follows is documented in the tribute “samIkShaNa vicintana prabhR^itibhiH svayaM tAdR^ishaiH”. This attests to the fact that Daya Devi Herself becomes the Atma for the Divya mangala vigraham of Lord Narayana. Thus, when the Lord took the incarnation as Matsya murti, Daya Devi became His Atma. So too is the case of avatarams like kUrma, hamsa and the like. This is entirely with the view to gracing all beings of the universe. The grace of Daya Devi comes about in several forms. Every mother seeks to protect her child. The manner of protection varies from one mother to another and is unique to each child. A common feature for all mothers is feeding the child with milk. This is also true for animals such as cows and goats. Similarly, the protection afforded by hens and fishes to their offspring is unique in keeping with their essential nature. This is due to “IkShaNadhyAna saMsparshaiH” that is the protection comes about due to their sight and touch. In the context of Matsya, merely by beholding the offspring with its eyes, results in the act of protection. With respect to kUrma, the tortoise engages in dhyAnam (contemplation) of its offspring with feet folded. This itself results in protection. When it comes to birds, they spread their wings as a protective cover for their offspring. The touch of the wings results in protection for their offspring. In the DashAvatAra stotram Svami Desikan describes the matsya avataram through the salutation “nirmagna shR^itijAlamArgaNa dashA dattakShaNairvIkShaNaiH antastanvadivAravinda gahanAn yaudanvatInApAm



SrI Daya Devi enters the Lord's Divya mangala vigraham as His Atma

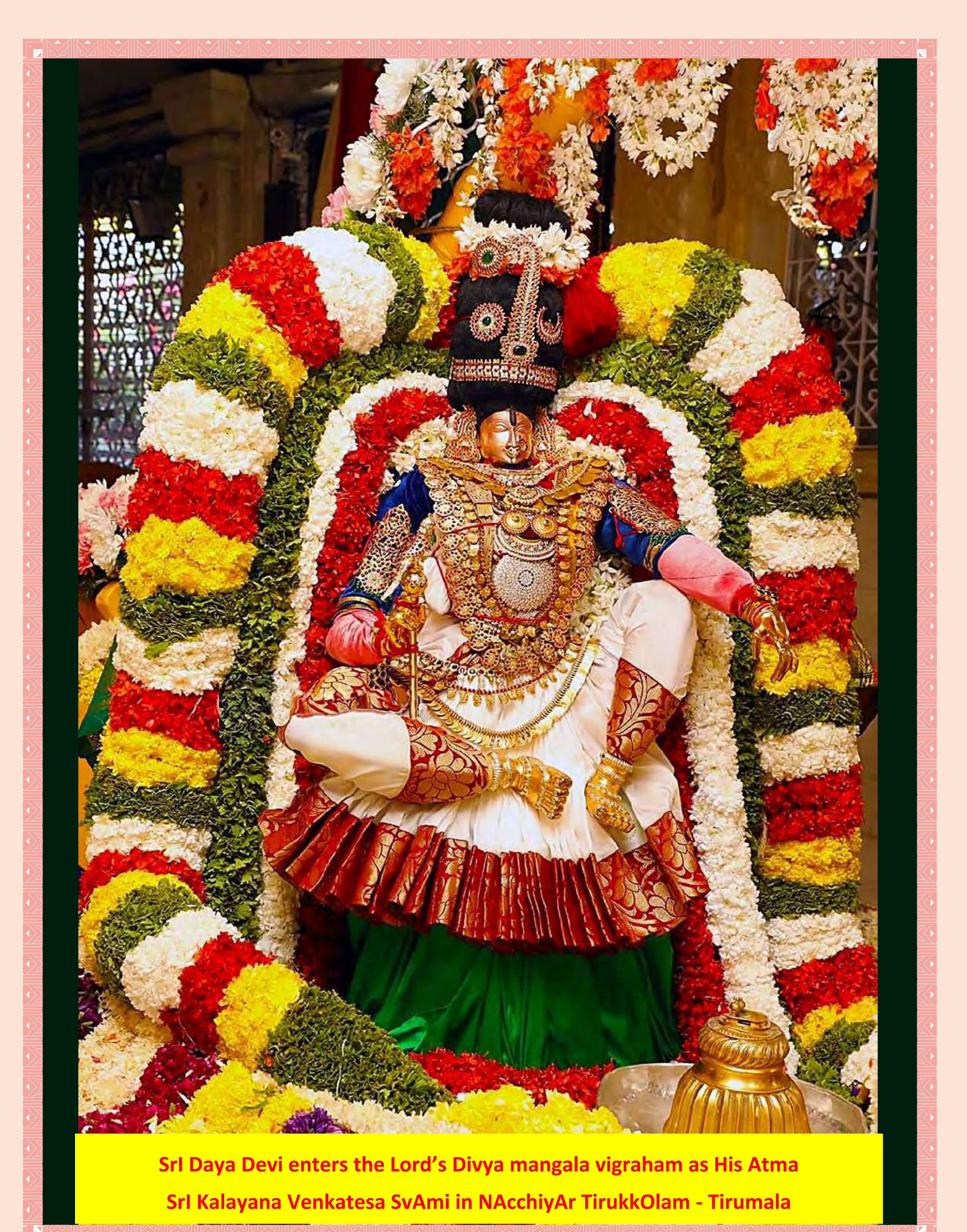
niShpratyUha tara~Ngari~NgaNamithaH pratyUDha pAthashChaTA dolAroha sadohaLaM bhagavato mAtsyaM vapuH pAtu naH". The asuras stole the Vedas from Brahma during the time of praLaya, when he was asleep. This deprived Brahma of all his lustre. In order to ensure that his son, Brahma, regained the lost lustre, Lord Narayana took the incarnation of matsya. While beholding the waters of the ocean where the asuras, who stole the Vedas, were hiding, it created the appearance of a multitude of lotuses (a collection of a large number of lotus gardens) springing up in the salty waters of the ocean. The prayer in this DashAvatAra stotram salutation is "May Lord Narayana, who incarnated as the fish, protect us." It is important to note the usage "vIkShaNaiH" in this context. The request of Svami Desikan is that may the glance of this matsya mUrti fall upon all of us to grace us.

Next, we focus on the tribute "vicintana" from the present Daya Satakam verse. Here the reference is to sankalpam in the manner of a tortoise engaged in dhyanam resulting in protection for its offspring. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi, who functions as the Atma for the kUrma murti, engages in Dhyanam of Her children. This itself guarantees their protection. Thus, the import of the tribute "samIkShaNa vicintana prabhR^itibhiH" reflects the fact that sight and dhyanam arising from the matsya and kUrma murti, respectively, are responsible for our protection. Also included here is sparsham, which is the characteristic of the Hamsa (swan) avataram of Lord Narayana. This is denoted by the usage "prabhR^itibhiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, Daya Devi entering the Divya Mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa as His Atma, causes the Lord to afford protection through sparsham (touch of His wings) in the Hamsa avataram, through the sight of the matsya avataram, and the dhyanam of the kUrma avataram. The tribute "vicitra guNa citritAM" denotes the astounding guNams inherent to these avatarams coming about on account of Daya Devi. These are numerous and beyond measure. The inner meaning is that it is in fact Daya Devi, who is responsible for our protection through the acts of sparsham, vIkShaNam, and dhyanam. This comes about in the manner of the unconditional love of a mother for her child, with no expectation of any kind. This cannot be found in anyone else is Svami Desikan's considered position. The tribute "vicitra guNa citritAM vividha doSha vaideshikIM" from this Daya Satakam verse describes the fact that these astonishing auspicious attributes of Lord Narayana, which are devoid of any blemish, are impossible to find elsewhere. This is a reference to the "akhilaheya pratyaNikatvam". Ubhaya lingatvam is alluded to in the salutation "vividha doSha vaideshikIM" salutation of this Daya Satakam verse.



KUrmAvatAra

This denotes the fact that Daya Devi is as far as one can get from all doshams (faults). The tribute "vR^iShAcalapateH tanuM vishasi matsya kUrmAdikAm" denotes the fact that Daya Devi upon causing Lord Srinivasa to take the incarnations of matsya and kUrma enters them as the Atma. This is intended exclusively for the purpose of gracing "Her Children"- all beings of the universe. In this context, it is helpful to recall the episode of Lord Rama's exile to the forest from the Srimad Ramayanam. Specifically, Dasharatha declares that Rama need not walk to the forest from Ayodhya. He can ride the chariot until He reaches the forest and



SrI Daya Devi enters the Lord's Divya mangala vigraham as His Atma

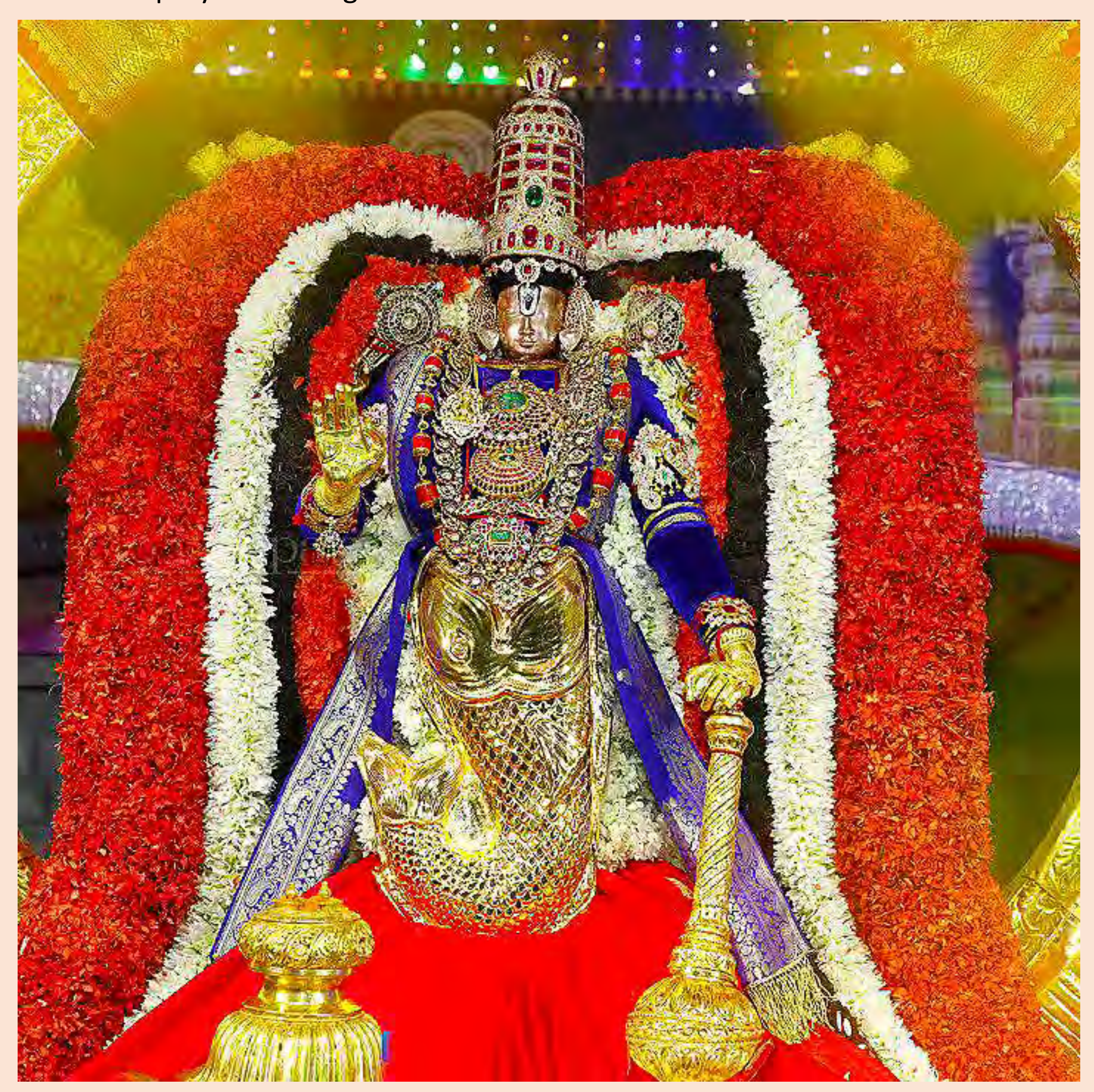
SrI Kalayana Venkatesa SvAmi in NAcchiyAr TirukkOlam - Tirumala

from then on travel on feet. Accordingly, he instructs Sumanthara to bring the chariot and Sumanthara follows this command. Lord Rama along with Lakshmana and Sita are ready to leave for the forest. Since Lord Rama was the one that was commanded to leave for the forest, protocol requires that He should be the first one to get on the chariot. Instead, Sita Devi ascends the chariot before Him. This is documented in the verses "taM rathaM sUrya sa~NkAshaM sItA hR^iShTena cetasA Aruroha varArohA kR^itvAla~NkAramAtmanaH" and "athojvalana sankAshaM cAmIkaravibhUShitaM taM AruruhatustUrNaM bhrAtaru rAmalakShmaNau". Again, while using the boat of king Guha, it is Sitaa who ascends first as seen from the salutations "sa bhrAtuH shAsanaM shR^itvA sarvaM apratikUlayan Aropya maithilIM pUrvaM ArurohAtmavAmstataH" and "athAruroha tejasvI svayaM lakShmaNa pUrvajaH" This is a powerful demonstration of the fact that when it comes to protecting all beings in the universe, the Lord must be preceded by Daya Devi.



It must be borne in mind that Lord Narayana's sworn position is that of protecting those who have surrendered to Him. It is the duty of the patni to ensure that the Lord's sworn position is successfully executed. This is revealed by the actions of Sita Devi from these Ramayanam verses. In a like manner, executing the Lord's sworn position becomes Daya Devi's mission. Thus, Swami Desikan exposits in this verse that in order to bring about the protection of all beings in the universe, Daya Devi causes the Lord to incarnate as Hamsa, Matsya, and KUrma. Not only that in order to bring this act to fruition, She enters the Lord's Divya mangala vigraham as His Atma. Thus, it is exclusively for protecting hapless jivans like us that Daya Devi undertakes this act so that She can grace us through

sparsham, darsanam, and chintanam. We conclude the elaboration of this verse with these prayerful thoughts."



MatsyAvatAra

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

" Oh Daya Devi! You created the universe in all its diversity. What a variety of creatures! What a wonderful variety of appearance and quality! Having done it, You take interest in the nourishment of the creatures and the world You have created. You make the Lord take various forms. He enters and You enter even earlier! In the specific being; if it is fish form You nourish the baby fish through the

eyes - the very sight nourishes the offspring as if it is the offering of breast milk, which is given by mammals. If it is tortoise avatara, mere contemplation in the mind, by the mother-kUrma will nourish the offspring. If it were the Hamsa avatara, the mother would embrace the kids and nourish them. So much so, Srinivasa took the avataras of Fish, Tortoise, and Swan. The Lord took the form. That is all. You Daya Devi helped feed the offspring. Even in such avataras, the Lord is perfect in guNas. There is not a single stigma. Thus, we find the demonstration of ubhaya lingatva in these avatarams also. A few observations are in order:

1. The popular notion is that the fish and other creatures nourishing offspring in specific ways has perhaps no Sastraic basis nor a scientific basis as we know. Svami Desikan has composed a verse in sankalpa sUryodaya with regard to this point. However, readers must note that such theories even if unfounded help demonstrate the VAtsalya guNa.

2. Note that we are able to have the benefit of the Lord's avatarams only due to Daya Devi's initiation, especially the principal avatarams. Daya also enters and assists the Supreme being to confer nourishment on the children of all species. This explains the theory of the Fish nourishing its offspring by the eye-glance, and tortoise nourishing by mere thought.

3. Vedanta theorizes that the Supreme Being is full of auspicious qualities and is without a dosha or stigma. This is the reference to ubhaya lingatva - the twin characteristics.



Slokam 83

युगान्त समयोचितं भजति योग निद्रारसं
वृषक्षितिभृदीश्वरे विहरण क्रमाज्जाग्रति ।
उदीर्ण चतुरर्णवी कदन वेदिनी मेदिनीं
समुद्धृतवती दये तदभिजुष्टया दंष्ट्रया ॥८३ ॥

yugAnta samayochitaM bhajati yoga nidrA rasaM
vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare viharaNa kramAjjAgrati|
udIrNa chaturarNavI kadana vedinIM medinIm
samud dhR^itavatI daye tad abhijuShTayA daMShTrayA||83



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "yugAnta samayochitaM bhajati yoga nidrA rasaM vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare viharaNa kramAjjAgrati udIrNa chaturarNavI kadana vedinIM medinIm samud dhR^itavatI daye tad abhijuShTayA daMShTrayA". The previous verse highlighted the glory of Matsya and kUrma avatarams in the manner of protection afforded by Them through sight and dhyanam, respectively. Daya Devi's sole motto is to ensure the well-being of all sentients and insentients in the universe. Therefore, She causes the Lord to take the incarnations of matsya and kUrma to offer protection to these beings. Additionally, since Svami Desikan refers to sparsham in the previous verse by way of protection afforded by the Lord, he also covers the Hamsa avataram in this context. Next among the principal incarnations of Lord Narayana is the Varaha avataram, which is glorified in this Daya Satakam verse. When it comes to offering tribute to the Varaha avataram, there are several scriptures that are available. In summary, during this incarnation, Lord Narayana destroyed Hiranyaksha and rescued Bhumi Devi from the depths of the ocean. Here Svami Desikan brings out a message from the puranas. There are two types of pralayams that occur - one is avantara pralayam and the other is mahapralayam. The former occurs at the end of a thousand chaturyugams. The latter is the state that precedes a new cycle of creation. The four yugams of kruta, treta, dvapara, and kali occur cyclically. In keeping with the statement "chaturyuga sahasre dve brahmaNo dinamuchyate" a day of Brahma is described.



bhUmiH dhenuH dharaNI lokadhAriNI uddhrutAsi varAheNa kR^iShNena shatabAhunA

For humans one year is composed of six months of uttarayanam and six months of dakshinayanam. For devatas, one human year corresponds to a day of their life with uttarayanam constituting their day time and dakshinayanam denoting their night. Since the margazhi month occurs before the onset of uttarayanam it is the ushat kAlam for devatas. Therefore, during this month, it is

extremely sacred and important to offer worship to Lord Narayana during the ushat kalam (Brahma muhurtam). In a like manner, a day in the life of Brahma consists of two thousand chaturyugams. Thus, one thousand chaturyugam cycles correspond to daytime for the four-faced Brahma, while an additional thousand chaturyugam cycles denote his nighttime. The concept of yashti drushti and samashti drushti need to be understood before one delves into the meaning of this verse.

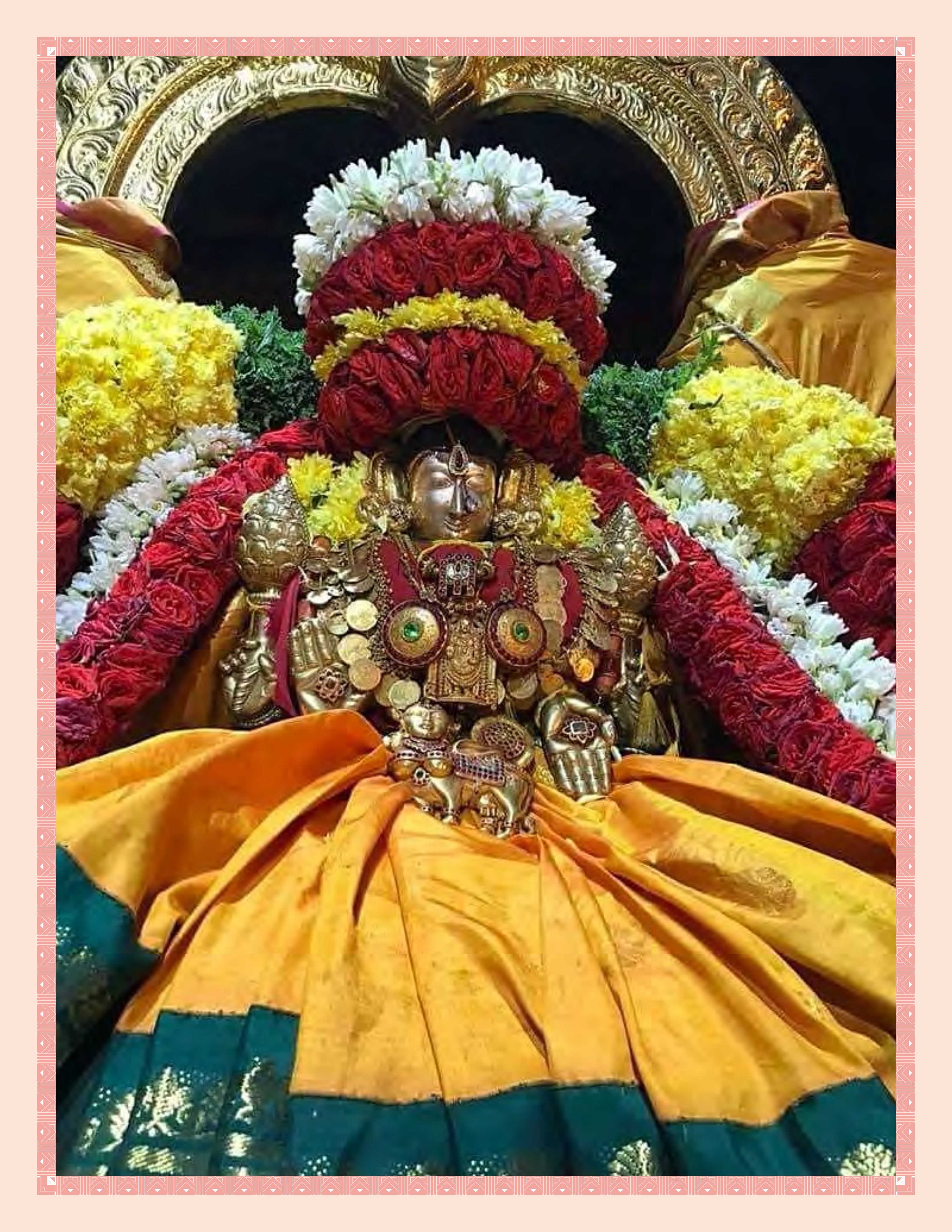


In the tribute "acidavishiShTAn praLaye jantUn avalokya jAta nirveda karaNakaLebara yogam vitarasi vR^iShashailanAtha karuNe tvam" from verse 17 of Daya Satakam, Svami Desikan highlighted the role of Daya Devi in the process of creation of the universe. Specifically, during the time of mahapralayam, all sentient beings were in an inert state totally incapable of anything. Greatly moved by their plight, the most compassionate Daya Devi reasons that may be if the jivan is endowed with sense organs to experience pain and pleasure, in accordance with accrued karma, the jivan will put these sense organs to good use in Bhagavad Kaimkarayam and seek refuge in Lord Narayana through the mode of sharaNAgati for redemption. Thus, Daya Devi submits Her impassioned appeal to Lord Narayana to afford the jivan another chance and causes Lord Narayana to undertake the task of creation of the universe. The task of creation is undertaken using the four-faced Brahma as the medium. Specifically, the task of creation is brought about by Lord Narayana, who is present as the indweller in the four-faced Brahma. This is called vyashti drushti - viewed from an individual perspective. When viewed from samashti drushti, a collective or whole perspective, when water is all that existed at the beginning. Creating the water and then subsequently the universe with all its beings - sentient and insentient - is known as samashti drushti. Lord Narayana is the cause for both these forms of srushti. In the context of vyashti srushti, it was pointed out that Lord

Narayana, resident as the indweller of the four-faced Brahma, undertakes the task of creation. One thousand chaturyugams constitute a day in the life of Brahma, while one thousand chaturyugams correspond to the nighttime for him. The Varaha avataram is viewed in this context. Specifically, after one thousand chaturyugams, the earth became invisible due to being enveloped by the ocean waters in the four directions. At this juncture, the Varaha avataram took place to restore the earth to its original position and thereby rescue all inhabitants of the earth. This is the puranic explanation, which Svami Desikan captures in this Daya Satakam verse.



Svami NammAzhvar enjoys the Varaha avataram in several pasurams as does Sri Andal nacchiyar. Specifically, Her pasuram from the Nacchiyar Tirumozhi "pAcitUrttu kiDanta pAr makaTku paNDorunAL macuDampil nIr vArA mAnamilA panRiyAm tecuDaiya tEvar tiruvaranga celvanAr peci iruppanakaL pErkkavum pErAvE" is quite instructive. The tribute "pAcitUrttu kiDanta pAr makaTku paNDorunAL macuDampil nIr vArA mAnamilA panRiyAm" denotes the fact that the earth was full of moss due to being submerged under water. In this state, Lord Narayana took an incredible form. When it comes to the Lord becoming gigantic, the Trivikrama avataram at once comes to mind. In three giant strides, He covered the entire universe. However, the task accomplished by Varaha was matchless. In the DashAvatara Stotram tribute "gopAyedanishaM jaganti kuhanA potrI pavitrI kR^ita brahmANDaH praLayormi ghoShagurubhir ghoNaravairghurghuraiH yaddamShTrA~NkurakoTigADha ghaTana niShkampa nitya sthitiH brahmastambamasaudasau bhagavatI musteva vishvambharA", Svami Desikan states that the glory of this avataram is indescribable and immeasurable. Taking this gigantic boar form, Lord Narayana used the teeth to rescue the earth from the depths of the ocean. According to Andal's pasuram, it is Lord Ranganatha who incarnated as Varaha to rescue the earth.



According to the Daya Satakam tribute, it is Daya Devi who is responsible for the Lord to undertake His numerous avatarams. Not only that, She is present along with the Lord in each avataram to lend a unique exquisiteness to each form that the Lord takes. In this Daya Satakam verse, the sambodhanam is "daye" (Oh Daya Devi!). The tribute "yugAnta samayochitaM bhajati yoga nidrA rasaM" reflects the fact that what is commonly perceived by ordinary people, is also applicable to Lord Narayana in keeping with the dictum "yadanna puruSho bhavati tadanna vasudevatAH" (food that is consumed by common people is also consumed by Devatas). Thus, there is no difference between common folk and Devatas in this respect. This must be understood from the standpoint that what is offered as neivedyam becomes the food for the Devata. What is offered in neivedyam is what the common individual consumes as food. Thus, in a given day common folk rise in the morning, engage in their daily duties, partake of food, and when night arrives, retire to sleep. The four-faced Brahma too engages in activities during the daytime corresponding to a thousand cycles of chatur-yugam. Similarly, at night corresponding to another thousand cycles of chatur-yugam, Brahma goes to sleep.

In the same vein, Lord Narayana too feigns to sleep in yoga nidra after engaging in activities during daytime. If one does not sleep at night, it means that the person is afflicted by disease or is beset by worries due to several causes. If the lack of sleep comes about due to engaging in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam due to parayanams and utsavams running into extended nighttime hours, the lack of sleep becomes understandable. However, on a regular day if one suffers from sleeplessness, it invariably comes about due to illness or worry. Sleep at night is part of one's inherent nature. Lord Narayana too acts in this manner as described by Svami Desikan through the tribute "yugAnta samayochitaM bhajati yoga nidrA rasaM". However, there is a subtle difference between our sleep and the Lord's sleep, which is described as yoga nidra. yoga eva nidra is the meaning of yoga nidra. "uranguvAn pOl yoku seikinRAn" is the Azhvar mangalasasanam. Although it is perceived that the Lord is resting with eyes closed, He is not asleep. Instead, He is in yoga state, which gives the appearance of being asleep. This is an important difference between the sleep state of ordinary humans, known as sushupti, wherein the faculties such as the mind, intellect and the like cease to function. These are in a state of rest. However, for Lord Narayana, it is not so. His faculties are fully alert, even though He feigns sleep. From the perspective of human beings, it is perceived as the Lord too is asleep at night and has to be woken up through recitation of the suprabhatam verse "kausalyA suprajA rAma pUrvA sandhya pravartate uttiShTa narashArdhUla kartavyam daivamAnhikam" in the morning.

This suprabhatam verse is due to sage Vishvamitra as documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam. This is adopted at all Divya Desams to awaken the Lord. The practice of awakening the Lord comes about only when He is asleep and thus, it is a custom to have the Lord engage in Shayana sevai, where He is in yogam state. However, the important difference to be noted is that even though the Lord is seemingly asleep, He is fully aware of His faculties.



yoga nidrA rasaM bhajati

Accordingly, the tribute "yugAnta samayochitaM bhajati yoga nidrA rasaM" documents the fact that during the concluding time of the one thousand chaturyugams corresponding to the night of Brahma, Lord Narayana engages in yoga nidra. The anvaya kramam for this salutation is "yoga nidrA rasaM bhajati" namely, the Lord engages in this activity with delight. The tribute "vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare viharaNa kramAjjAgrati" documents the fact that the Lord is in fact not asleep. Instead, His activities of srushti, stithi, and laya, which are meant for leela rasam (for His enjoyment), are the objects of His contemplation, while engaged in yoga nidra. This is the important difference between Lord Narayana's

yogam state and our state of sushupthi (deep sleep). Specifically, we encounter j~nAna sa~Nkocam (complete shrinking of knowledge) during this state. However, for Lord Narayana, there is no question of j~nAna sa~Nkocam. He is always in the state of j~nAna vikAsam (fully expanded knowledge). Even in His yoga nidra state, Lord Narayana is engaged in contemplation of His task of protecting the universe. This is captured in the tribute "yoga nidrA rasaM vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare viharaNa kramAjjAgrati" from this Daya Satakam verse. It is instructive to note that the tributes bhajati and jagrati are used in present tense (varthamAna kAlam). It is well known that one cannot be sleeping while awake and vice versa. When the two tributes are used in present tense in the context of Lord Narayana, it conveys this import, which is impossible to happen at the same time. Some people may walk while asleep, while some others may keep their eyes open while sleeping and yet others may be speaking while asleep. This is not what the tributes allude to in the context of Lord Narayana. Instead, Lord Narayana, beautifully reconciles these seemingly opposite actions, which can never occur simultaneously. Specifically, with eyes closed Lord Narayana is engaged in contemplation of the task of protection of the sentient and insentient beings of the universe. Thus, the actions of sleeping and remaining awake denoted by the opposite "Bhajati" and "jAgrati" tributes are at once reconciled. This can be appreciated from the following perspective. Lord Ranganatha is seen in a reclining posture on His serpent bed in Srirangam. The question is whether Lord Ranganatha is asleep or awake in this posture. Sri Parashara Bhattar in the Rangaraja stotram declares "saptaprAkAra madhye sarasijamukulodbhAsamAne vimAne kAveri madhya deshe mR^idutara phaNirAD bhogaparya~NkabhAge nidrAmudrAbhirAmaM kaTinikaTashiraH pArshvavinyasta hastaM padmAdAtrIkarAbhyAM paricitacaraNaM ra~NgarAjaM bhajeham" In the middle of the seven prAkarams, there is an astonishingly beautiful Temple, where Lord Ranganatha has taken root. This is located at the intersection of two Kaveris (ubhaya kaveri). He is reclining on the serpent bed replete with auspicious qualities pretending to be asleep. He is breathtakingly beautiful to behold in this form. However, even in this state He is engaged in contemplation of how to destroy those that are inimically inclined towards those who have sought refuge at His Feet. Here Sri Parashara Bhattar enjoys the Lord in Rama avataram. When he is seen sleeping on the lap of SItA Devi, He is described in the Ramayanam as "param tapaH" denoting the fact that it is really one's good fortune to behold the Lord in this state. Such a sight instills fear in the hearts of those maliciously inclined towards the Lord's sharaNAgatas. Thus, it becomes clear that Lord Narayana and Thayar are never engaged in sleep. Instead, they are



constantly immersed in thoughts of protecting those who have sought refuge in Them.



Daya Devi and Bhumi Devi are consorts of Lord Srinivasa

This Daya Satakam verse captures the sentiment in the context of Varaha and Bhumi Devi through the salutation "vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare viharaNa kramAjjAgrati". "vR^iSha kShitibhR^id" denotes the Venkatam hill. This is variously known as Vrushabhadri, AnjanAdri, Seshadri, Narayanadri denoting the seven hills of Tiruvenkatam. The salutation "kShitibR^id" alludes to the fact that the hill is supporting the earth. In this context, if the hill is offering relief for the earth from difficulties, it becomes the responsibility of the Lord of Seven Hills as evidenced by the tribute "vR^iSha kShitibhR^idIshvare". Upon waking up from yogam state, Lord Srinivasa, beholds the earth submerged by the ocean waters. The lokams known as atala, sutala, patala et al remain submerged under water. The ocean waters extend up to Mahar lokam. Lord Srinivasa is greatly concerned by the disappearance of

Bhumi Devi. It is Daya Devi, who first perceives this fact and recognizes that Bhumi Devi is in great distress. This is evidenced in the tribute “udIrNa chaturarNavI kadana vedinIM medinIm” denoting the fact that all directions are overflowing with the ocean waters resulting in great distress for Bhumi Devi. This is at once discerned by Daya Devi. In this context it must be noted that both Daya Devi and Bhumi Devi are consorts of Lord Srinivasa. This is denoted by the usage “cakkaLatti” in Tamil. The travails of a woman can only be understood by another woman. In keeping with this fact, Daya Devi instantly appreciates the troubles of Bhumi Devi. The tribute “vedinIM medinIm” is reflective of the usage “ahipadam ahireva jAnAti” mirrored by the Tamil equivalent “pAmpin kAl pAmpu aRiyum” (only a snake knows the ways of another snake). In a like manner, the travails of a woman can fully be comprehended only by another woman. It is impossible for men to gain a complete understanding of these travails. Even in the Tiruppavai, Andal wakes up Nandagopa only after getting Yashoda and Nappinai on Her side. The inner meaning of this Tiruppavai pasuram is that Bhagavan’s anugraham can only be secured if Thayar’s anugraham is in place. This is fundamental to the act of SharaNAgati. In the present instance, it is the responsibility of Lord Srinivasa to rescue Bhumi Devi in Her time of distress. Svami Desikan declares here that the task of protecting Bhumi Devi is in reality undertaken by Daya Devi. This is evidenced by the tribute “(tvaM) tad abhijuShTayA daMShTrayA”. It must be borne in mind that this is no ordinary boar. Instead, it is the Divya mangala vigraham of Lord Srinivasa, incarnating as the “Divine Boar” bearing giant tusks. He has adopted this immeasurable, indescribable form, for the sole purpose of rescuing Bhumi Devi at the initiation of Daya Devi. Here the usages “uddhR^itavatI” and “samuddhR^itavatI” need to be noted. The former denotes elevation, whereas the latter denotes great elevation. In an earlier verse the anugraham of Daya Devi is described in terms of “mR^ita sanjIvanamanjanAcalendoH” namely as one who revives a dead person and restores them to a condition that was healthier than their previous state. In this context the usage jIvanam must be contrasted with sanjIvanam. JIvanam with respect to a dying individual may be a means to postpone the inevitable by a month or two relegating them to a comatose state. In this state, they are unable to function in any manner that they were previously and are considered alive merely because they are breathing. On the other hand, sanjIvanam is transformative in that it rescues the individual from the brink of death and transforms them to a healthier state than they ever had previously. In a like fashion, the Varaha avataram conferred “samuddhR^itavatI” on account of Daya Devi transforming Herself into the giant teeth of the divine boar.





These giant teeth rescued Bhumi Devi from the depths of the ocean and restored Her to the original pristine state prior to being submerged by the ocean. Svami NammAzhvar performs his mangalasasanam for Bhagavan Varaha in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "kOlamalarpAvaikku anpAkiya en anpEyO nIlavarai iraNDu pirai kavvi nimirntatoppa kOla varAham onRAi nilam kOTTiDai koNDa entAi nIla kaDal kaDaintAi unnai peRRini pOkkuvanO". A hill that is borne by the mUnRAm pirai Chandran (thrice born moon) was the appearance of Bhagavan Varaha with His massive teeth bearing the earth. The import of Svami NammAzhvar's anubhavam is captured in the tribute "samuddhR^itavatI" of this Daya Satakam verse. This is undoubtedly the act of Daya Devi as eloquently established by Svami Desikan. Why did Bhagavan Varaha go through the extraordinary effort of rescuing Bhumi Devi from the depths of the ocean? This is answered through the verse "kR^itAkR^itaH kShAmyati keshavaH AshritAn akincanAstAn kamalAkaTAkDhayet na ca prasajya pratishedasidhiti yat kShamA tvamevorvi sahasvamAmapi" (Lord Keshava beholds those who have sinned greatly and forgives these sinful acts. This is His greatness. His consort, Kamala, graces those incapable ones (akinchanas), with Her compassionate eye-glances. Both of them become privy to the sins committed by the supplicant. The Lord sees those actions of the supplicant arising from prior karma causing the supplicant to commit sins. However, He forgives them. The Lord's consort, Kamala, graces them with Her benevolent eye-glances upon seeing their state of utter helplessness to elevate themselves. As a consequence, they gain elevation.

What is the task undertaken by Bhumi Devi? It is documented in the verse "na ca prasajya pratishedasidhiti yat kShamA tvamevorvi sahasvamAmapi". The salutation "prasajya pratishedha" denotes the faults that exist in every place. However, when it comes to Bhumi Devi, She becomes oblivious to the faults of the supplicant (It must be noted that Bhumi Devi is fully aware of these faults but choses to ignore them out of Her motherly love for these beings). It is with the view that only if one takes cognizance of the faults that one is confronted with the task

of forgiving these flaws. If the faults are a non-issue the question of forgiveness for these transgressions does not arise. When Bhumi Devi of such loftiness is in great distress, it becomes the responsibility of Lord Srinivasa to come to Her rescue. This is accomplished at the insistence of Daya Devi, who transformed Herself into the giant teeth of the Divine Boar, Varaha, and effortlessly restored Bhumi Devi to Her pristine condition. This fact is eloquently documented by Svami Desikan in this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"This verse is a glorification of the Varaha avataram. The deluge comes about once in a thousand chaturyuga expiry. It is the end of one day in the life of Chaturmukha Brahma. The earth gets submerged in a vast ocean of water that extends up to mahar lokam. The Lord at this time is engaged in blissful yoga nidhra. It is unlike the sleep of mere mortals, coming about on account of weariness. It is a stage of closing His eyes and engaging in a deep meditative contemplation of all aspects of His Sankalpa. This yoga nidra is on. Oh Daya Devi, You act now! Only You can do this. The earth is to be resurrected. The world ought to know who carried out this task. You prompt Lord Srinivasa to take the form of a massive boar with a long enough tusk, with which He could resurrect the sunken earth (Mother BhUmi Devi, in one sense!), realizing the suffering, and the desperation of earth in the vast flood of water. The following important points need to be remembered:

1. The thrust of the message from this verse is that Daya takes the form of the Tusk (damShTra) solely for the purpose of rescuing BhUmi Devi. Lord Srinivasa merely served as the auxiliary aid! It only enhances the glory of Lord Srinivasa since it is His Daya guNam, which brought about the task of rescuing the earth.

2. It must be borne in mind that this is no ordinary boar. Instead it is divine boar glorified in the Vedam as "bhUmiH dhenuH dharaNI lokadhAriNI uddhrutAsi varAheNa kR^iShNena shatabAhunA". Thus, there is Vedic support for this form assumed by Lord Srinivasa."



Slokam 84

सटापटलभीषणे सरभसाट्टहासोद्भटे

स्पुरत्क्रुधि परिस्फुटद्भृकुटिकेऽपि वक्त्रे कृते ।

दये वृषगिरीशितुर्दनुज डिम्भ दत्त स्तना

सरोज सदृशा दृशा समुदिताकृतिर्दृश्यसे ॥८४ ॥

saTApaTalabhIShaNe sarabhasATTa hAsodbhaTe

spurat kR^idhi parisphuTadbhR^ikuTike(a)pi vaktre kR^ite|

daye vR^iShagirIshiturdanuja Dimbha dattastanA

saroja sadR^ishA dR^ishA samuditAkR^itirdR^ishyase ||84



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Next, Svami Desikan describes the glory of the Narasimha avataram. First off, the greatness of Bhagavan Narasimha is matchless. Azhvars have dwelt at length on the glorification of this avataram. There are several unique aspects to this avataram. The foremost among them is the reason for His incarnation as Narasimha. It must be remembered that Bhagavan Narasimha incarnated for the sole purpose of upholding the words of His parama Bhagavata, Prahlada. Svami NammAzhvar waxes eloquent about the Narasimha avataram in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "enkum uLan kaNNan enRa makanai kAintu inkillayAl enRu iraNiyan tUN puDaippa ankappozhute avan vIya tOnRiya en cinkapirAn perumai ArAyum cIramaittE". Hiranyakashipu enquires of Prahlada as to where Lord Narayana is present. Prahlada answers that the omnipresent Lord can be found everywhere. His presence is not restricted to Temples, Salagramam, or Sri Vaikuntam. Instead, He is present everywhere. This is reflected in the tribute "enkum uLan kaNNan". Next, Hiranyakshipu points to a pillar and enquires "Is He present in this pillar?" This is evidenced in the salutation "enRa makanai kAintu inkillayAl enRu iraNiyan tUN". Prahlada answers affirmatively. Now the central issue becomes one of the Lord's presence in the pillar. Will the Lord be visible? This is answered in the tribute "puDaippa ankappozhutE avan vIya tOnRiya" reflecting the fact that a magnificent form of the Lord emerged from the pillar to bring about the destruction of Hiranyakashipu. Thus, the reason for the Narasimha avataram is itself quite

astonishing. Enjoyment of the avataram is quite thrilling and can take place endlessly.

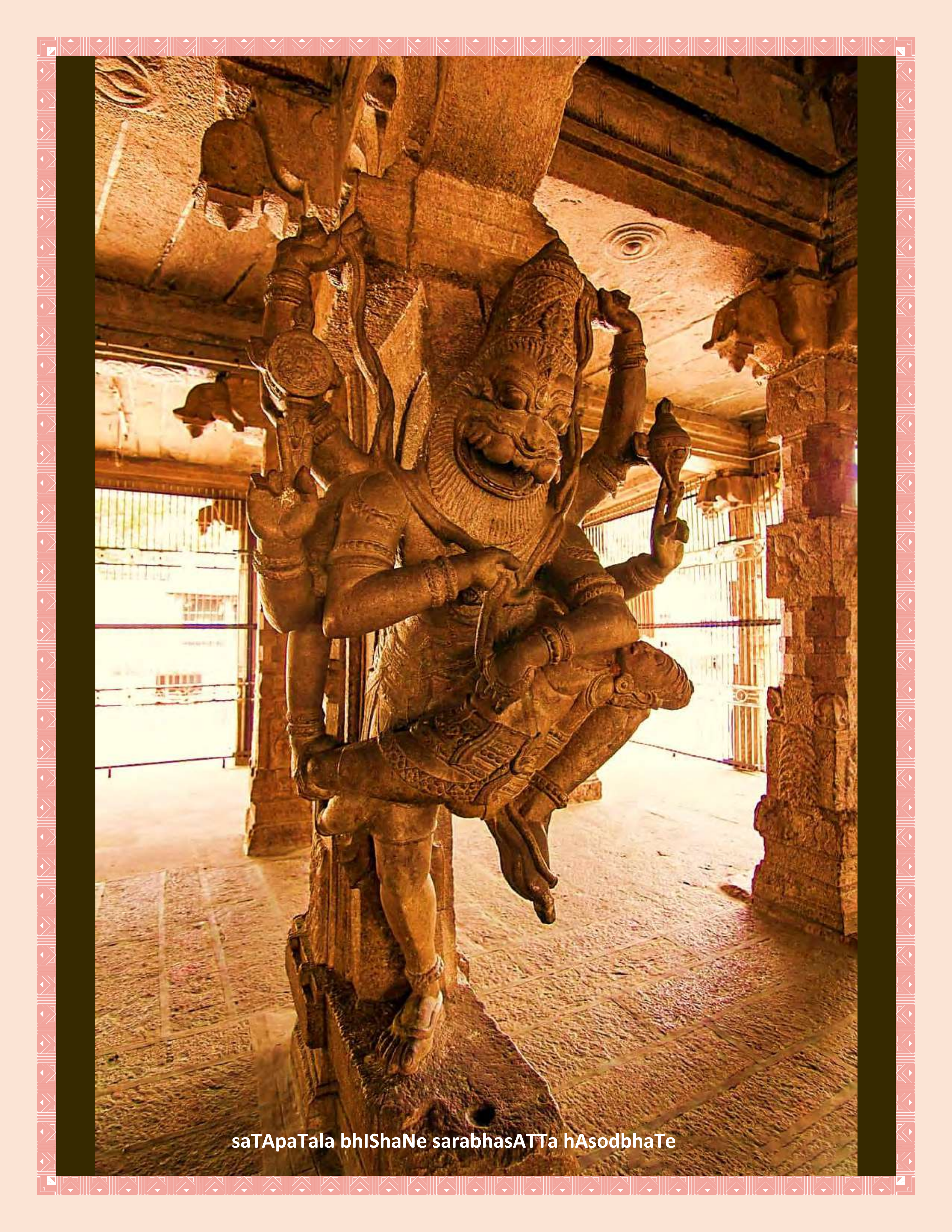


The astonishing Narasimha AvatAra!

The anubhavam of the Narasimha avataram is captured in the present Daya Satakam verse. This verse is "saTApaTala bhIShaNe sarabhasATTa hAsodbhaTe spurat kR^idhi parisphuTad bhR^ikuTike(a)pi vaktre kR^ite daye vR^iShagirIshiturdanuja Dimbha dattastanA saroja sadR^ishA dR^ishA samuditAkR^itirdR^ishyase". This avataram is replete with "aghaTitaghaTanA sAmarthyam"- (making the impossible possible). This also denotes making available something that is extremely hard to come by. Here it must be noted that what is impossible is actually transpiring in the context of Narasimha avataram. First off, the form of Bhagavan Narasimha was fearsome to Hiranyakashipu but extremely pleasing to Prahlada. The form too was unique in that it was neither man nor beast. Nor was it any devata form. The avataram took place during twilight - neither by day nor by night. The killing of HiraNyakashipu took place neither on the earth nor

in the sky. Instead, it happened on the lap of Bhagavan Narasimha. These astonishing acts can only be performed by Lord Narayana and no one else. The simultaneous appearance of fearsomeness as well as the pleasant form of Bhagavan Narasimha is documented in the tribute "saTApaTala bhIShaNe sarabhasATTa hAsodbhaTe spurat kR^idhi parisphuTad bhR^ikuTike(a)pi vaktre kR^ite" of this Daya Satakam verse. Svami Desikan affirms that this is possible only for Bhagavan Narasimha. The tribute is also meant for Daya Devi. The task of protecting sharaNAgatas attains completion only when those inimically inclined towards the sharaNAgata are destroyed. For example, Lord Rama undertook exile in the forest for the sole purpose of protecting the sages that had performed sharaNAgati seeking relief from harassment of the rakshasas. Their request to Lord Rama was very simple in that they declared that they were engaged in penance and sought the successful completion of their penance. They never sought the destruction of rakshasas like Khara, Dhushana, or Ravana. Their penance could be successfully completed only when all obstacles coming in the way of their austerities are destroyed. That is when the task of protecting sharaNAgatas attains a sense of fulfillment. Likewise, in the instance of Prahlada the protection attains completion only when HiraNyakashipu, who was inimically inclined, is destroyed. However, this task is rendered challenging due to the fact that Hiranyakashipu had been blessed by a boon from Brahma. The boon was that Hiranyan could not be killed by man, beast, bird, or devas. His end could not come about by day or by night, neither in the earth nor in the sky. No weapons could destroy him. Nothing wet or dry could bring about his end. Complying with all the conditions of this boon is extremely difficult. The unique form of Narasimha was neither man, beast, bird, or deva. Instead, it was a combination of a man and beast with the face of a lion and the body of a man. Next, neither a wet nor dry instrument could bring about HiraNyakashipu's end. The use of finger-nails by Bhagavan Narasimha to cleave the asura satisfied the condition that it is neither wet nor dry. HiraNyan's end could not come about either on the earth or in the sky. Bhagavan Narasimha complied with this requirement by placing HiraNyakashipu on His lap. HiraNyakashipu could not be killed either by day or by night. Bhagavan Narasimha incarnated during the Sandhya kAlam (twilight), which was neither day nor night, thereby meeting this condition of Brahma's boon.

It is helpful to dwell on Sri Narayana Bhattadri's NArAyaNIyam description of the Narasimha avataram. Specifically, HiraNyakashipu enquired if Lord Narayana was present in the pillar at his court. Prahlada replies that Lord is absolutely present in the pillar.


saTApaTala bhIShaNe sarabhasATTa hAsodbhaTe

In response, HiraNyakashipu strikes the pillar with his fist and challenges the words of Prahlada. Instantly, Bhagavan Narasimha burst forth from the pillar, with a smile that caused HiraNyan to shudder.

Narayana Bhattadri declares that he is unable to find appropriate words to glorify the avataram of Bhagavan Narasimha. He declares that this avataram is "anirvacanIyam" (beyond description by words), and "atyAshcaryam" (astounding) with the face of a lion and the body of a man. Given this background, Svami Desikan provides a glimpse of the avataram through the tribute "saTApaTala bhIShaNe" of this Daya Satakam verse to highlight the fact that the lion face of Bhagavan Narasimha was beautified by the mane and at the same time extremely fearsome. The salutation "sarabhasATTa hAsodbhaTe" of this Daya Satakam verse denotes that Bhagavan emerged from the pillar making a frightening sound accompanied by laughter. This is in stark contrast to His avatarams of Rama and Krishna, where He was the personification of calmness. Bhagavan Narasimha's sight and sound instilled fear in the heart of HiraNyakashipu. It is important to note that out of his anxiety to uphold the words of Prahlada, the parama bhagavata, Bhagavan Narasimha assumed this form beholding which Prahlada's enemies would tremble in fright. The tribute "parisphuTad bhR^ikuTike(a)pi vaktre" from this Daya Satakam verse highlights the fact the extremely dazzling, luminous form of Bhagavan resembling fire was truly awe-inspiring.

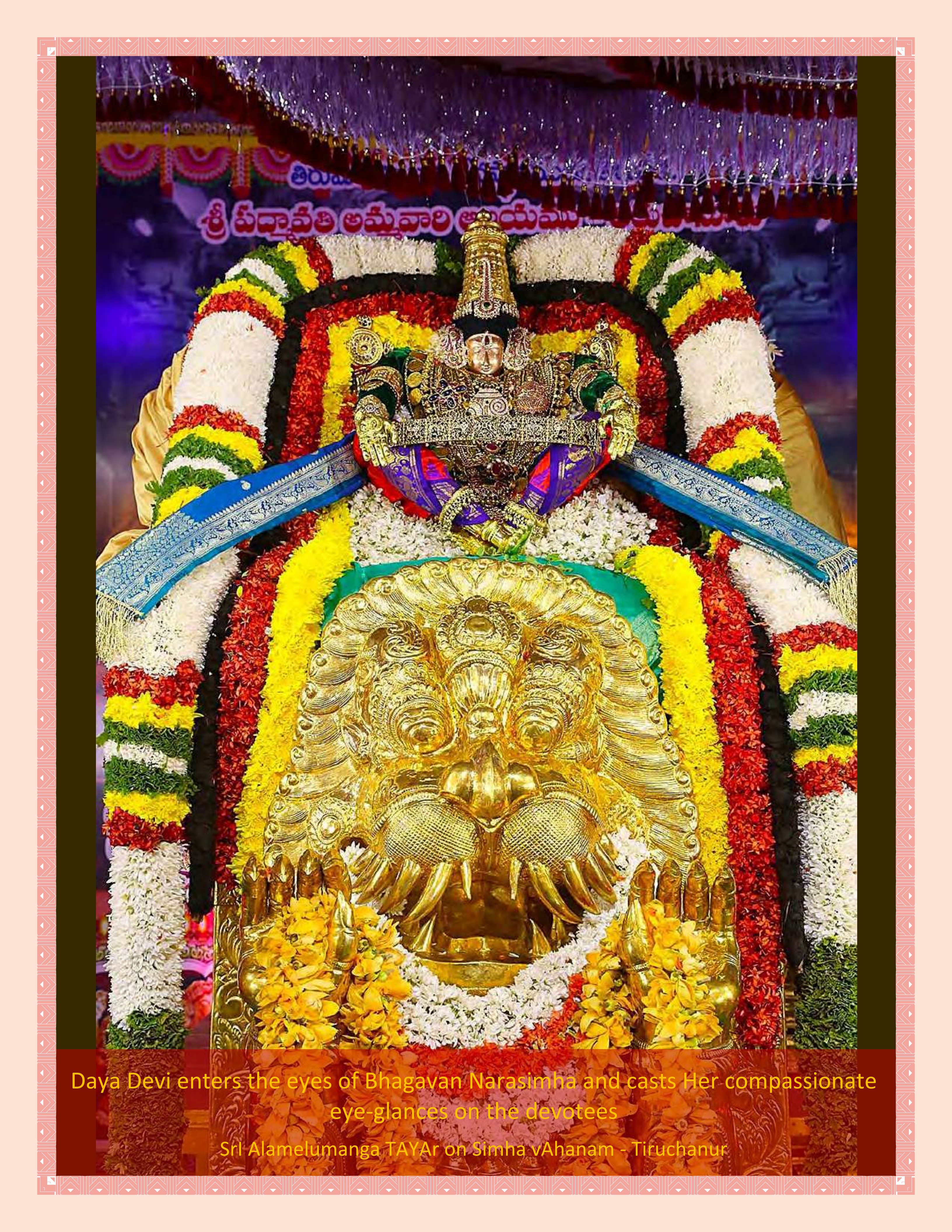
Further, the tribute "spurat kR^idhi kR^ite" needs to be understood that Bhagavan Narasimha caused the appearance of a fearsome form, even though His inherent nature is one of pleasantness. The inner meaning is that contrary to His inherent nature of pleasantness, Bhagavan took on the fearsome form replete with anger to instill fear in HiraNyan for the sole purpose of assuring Prahlada that He was ready to go to any extent to protect His supplicant. Thus, the first two lines of this verse describe the fearsome form of Bhagavan Narasimha. It must also be remembered that Prahlada was by the side of Bhagavan during the time of the avataram. Bhagavan graces Prahlada with His eye-glances. This is described in the next two lines of this verse. The tribute "saroja sadR^ishA dR^ishA samuditAkR^itirdR^ishyase" highlights this aspect. "saroja sadR^ishA" denotes the fact that the Lord is the Lotus-eyed one. The tribute "danuja Dimbha dattastanA" denotes the fact that the compassionate eye-glances of Bhagavan Narasimha were like the offering of breast milk of a lion to its young one. This is entirely the doing of Daya Devi. The tribute "samuditAkR^itirdR^ishyase" highlights the fact that the purpose of Bhagavan Narasimha's avataram attained completion as a result of this act of Daya Devi.



The lion face of Bhagavan Narasimha was beautified by the mane and at the same time extremely fearsome

The inner meaning is that Daya Devi entered the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha to cause the appearance of a lion offering breast milk to its young one through the compassionate eye-glances. Due to this fact, Prahlada was the recipient of the complete (paripurna) kataksham of Daya Devi. Therefore, the avataram of Bhagavan Narasimha gained a state of fulfillment. It needs to be remembered that the first act upon. Bhagavan's incarnation was the killing of HiraNyakashipu. However, Bhagavan Narasimha's anger was not abated by the killing of HiraNyakashipu. So terrible was His form that none dare go near the Lord. All present at the palace were stupefied by fear and sought the grace of Mahalakshmi. The intervention of Mahalakshmi as Daya Devi, causing the Lord's compassionate eye-glances to fall upon Prahlada in the form of breast-milk offering, satiated the Lord's anger. No doubt this took place in the past. How then does Svami Desikan employ the tribute "dR^ishyase" denoting present tense (vartamana kalam) in this context? The inner meaning underlying this usage is that Bhagavan Narasimha no doubt incarnated to protect His parama Bhagavata, Prahlada. This act was taken to completion first by the killing of HiraNyakashipu and then by Daya Devi entering the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha to grace Prahlada with Her Kataksham in the manner of a lion offering breast milk for its young one. The present tense usage by Svami Desikan is meant to convey the message that Bhagavan Narasimha stands ready (in archa form) even at the present time to destroy the enemies of those who have surrendered to Him. Daya Devi accompanies Him as His eyes in order to grace the SharaNagatas with Her compassionate eye-glances. The tribute "saroja sadR^ishA dR^ishA samuditAkR^itirdR^ishyase" is meant as a glorification for Daya Devi, who ensured that the Lotus-eyed Lord cast His benevolent eye-glances on the Asura-Child Prahlada (this needs to be understood in the context that that the Lord makes no discrimination of any kind when it comes to protecting those who have surrendered to Him) in the manner of breast-milk offering by the lion for its young one, thereby providing a sense of completion for the avataram. This tribute can also be interpreted as: Daya Devi, possessed of Lotus eyes, cast Her compassionate glances on the Asura child, Prahlada, in the manner of breast milk offering, highlighting the greatness of Mahalakshmi Thayar/Daya Devi. The implication of this tribute is that Bhagavan's anugraham does not exist in isolation. It is always accompanied by the anugraham of Thayar.

With respect to the Narasimha avataram, it needs to be appreciated in the context of Daya Devi entering the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha and casting Her compassionate eye-glances on Prahlada.



Daya Devi enters the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha and casts Her compassionate eye-glances on the devotees

SrI Alamelumanga TAYAr on Simha vAhanam - Tiruchanur



Therefore, Bhagavan Narasimha's anugraham was accompanied by that of Mahalakshmi Thayar. In verse 23 of the VaradarAja PanchAshat, Svami Desikan describes the Narasimha avataram as "bhaktasya dAnavashishoH paripAlanAya bhadrAM nR^isimha kuhanAM adhijagmuShaste stambhaika varja madhunA(a)pi karIsha nUnaM trailokyametadakhilaM narasimha garbham" In order to completely protect (paripalanAya), His Bhaktha, the asura child Prahlada, the parama mangala (extremely auspicious) Bhagavan Narasimha took root in every pillar in the universe and emerged from only one of them. Thus, it became an established practice to adorn pillars in homes with Rangoli (kolam) on the occasion of Narasimha Jayanthi. Such Bhagavan is described as "miLirntu cevvariyODi apperiyavAya kaNkaL" when the Azhvar performs mangalasasanam to Lord Ranganatha. This same Bhagavan incarnated as Narasimha to grace His parama Bhagavata, Prahlada with His compassionate eye-glances. The pleasantness of these eye-glances defy description by words. One needs to contrast this with the fearsome facial appearance of Bhagavan Narasimha, which caused all onlookers to tremble with fear. The pleasantness existing within the fearsomeness is brought about by Daya Devi. With the prayerful request of invoking the compassionate glances of Daya Devi from the Narasimha avataram for all, adiyen concludes the exposition of this Daya Shatakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Lord Narasimha suddenly appeared from a pillar that was knocked by the demon king Hiranyakashipu. In this avataram, He had matted hair-locks of manes, characterizing a lion, very ferocious, scary, roaring, and threatening with terrible teeth. He laughed with great gusto and noise (popularly described as attahasa-laughter). This was a prominent outward display of His wrath with fast throbbing eyebrows and the whole face being put on in this fashion. Then Oh Daya Devi, a



Oh Mother Daya Devi!

You appear even today in the eye-glance of the Lord in Archa Avatara!

proud characteristic of the Lord of the Hills, Srinivasa, You were revealed in the lotus-like eye, as a material mother, so to say, in concrete form in His eye-glance. This was in the manner of suckling the asura child, Prahlada, like a mother suckling her pet child born of her. This was so obvious to all! I may add Oh Mother Daya Devi! You appear even today in the eye-glance of the Lord (in Archa avatara) as if suckling all sentients as a fond mother would. Hence the present tense usage dR^ishyase."



Slokam 85

प्रसक्त मधुना विधि प्रणिहितैः सपर्योदकैः

समस्त दुरितच्छिदा निगम गन्धिना त्वं दये ।

अशेषमविशेषतस्त्रिजगदञ्जनाद्रीशितुः

चराचरमचीकरश्चरण पङ्कजेनाङ्कितम् ॥ ८५ ॥

prasakta madhunA vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH

samasta duritacChidA nigama gandhinA tvaM daye|

asheSham avisheShataH trijagad a~njanAdrI shituH

carAcaram acIkara sharaNa pa~Nkajena a~Nkitam||85



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

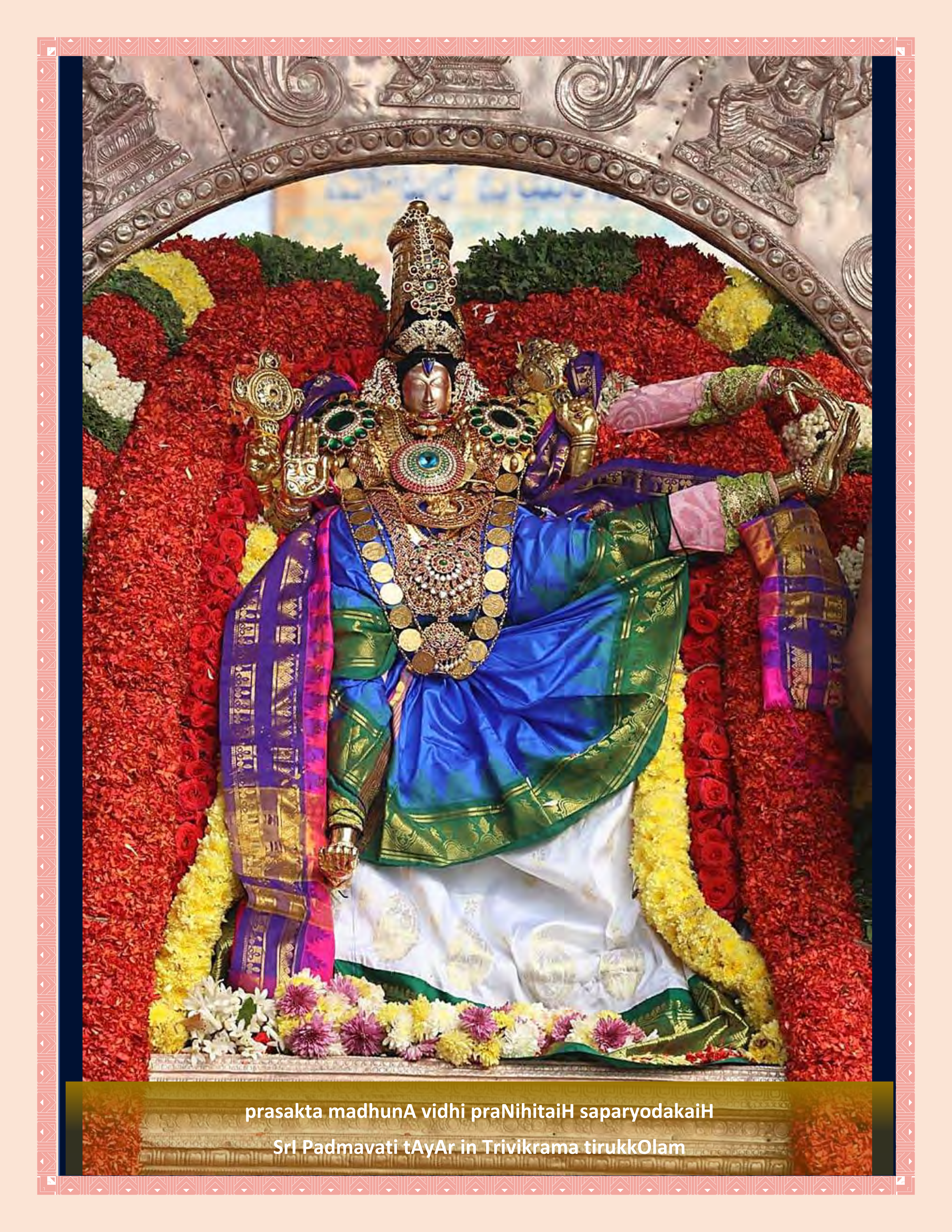
"We are enjoying this outstanding stuti by Svami Desikan. This set of ten verses devoted to the principal avatarams of Lord Narayana coming about at the behest of Daya Devi is the focus of our exposition. The previous verse depicted the glory of the Narasimha avataram. The fearsome form assumed by Bhagavan Narasimha, the destruction of Hiranyakashipu, and the compassionate eye-glances of Daya Devi for Prahlada in the manner of a mother feeding her favorite child with breast milk were documented therein. A question may arise for common individuals, as to whether the act of gracing Prahlada in the manner of a mother feeding breast milk was "athishayam" (eminent) or that of extreme compassion on the part of Lord Narasimha. This is answered by Svami Desikan through the usage "saroja sadR^ishA dR^ishA danuja Dimbha dattastanA" in the previous verse. This denotes the fact that Daya Devi took root in the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha. As a consequence, when His gaze fell on Prahlada, He became privy to the complete kataksham of Daya Devi. This kataksham was in the manner of the offering of breast milk by the mother for its young one. This gives rise to another question, namely, how could one bestow upon a young one the act of feeding with breast milk by mere sight. This has been answered in a prior verse in the context of the matsya avataram through the tribute "samIkShaNa vicintana prabhR^itibhiH svayaM tAdR^ishaiH", namely the fish offers protection to its young ones by merely seeing them. Here, the anugraham for Prahlada from Daya Devi comes about in the same manner.



anRu j~nAlam aLanta pirAn

The rules pertaining to sense organs engaging in specific tasks are applicable only in the Prakruti mandalam. However, in Sri Vaikuntam there are no such restrictions. The sense organs can operate interchangeably without any bounds leading to constant enjoyment of the Divine Couple resulting in unlimited bliss. The Narasimha avataram was a sneak preview of this form of enjoyment of the Lord through His eye-glances offering breast milk to Daya Devi's favorite child, Prahlada. This causes Svami NammAzhvar to declare through the "en sinkapirAn perumai" tribute in the Tiruvaimozhi that the glory of Bhagavan Narasimha is matchless. Next in the sequel is the Vamana avataram. This is also known as Trivikrama avataram. We may wonder what is the role of Daya Devi in this incarnation? The answer lies in Her manifestation as the feet of Trivikrama. The anubhavam is described in this most beautiful Daya Satakam verse. This verse is "prasakta madhunA vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH samasta duritacChidA nigama gandhinA tvaM daye asheSham avisheShataH trijagad a~njanAdrI shituH carAcaram acIkara sharaNa pa~Nkajena a~Nkitam". Daya Devi is responsible for the Trivikrama avataram, which graced all beings - sentient and insentient - with the touch of His feet. Svami NammAzhvar offers his mangalasasanam to this avataram in the Tiruvaimozhi

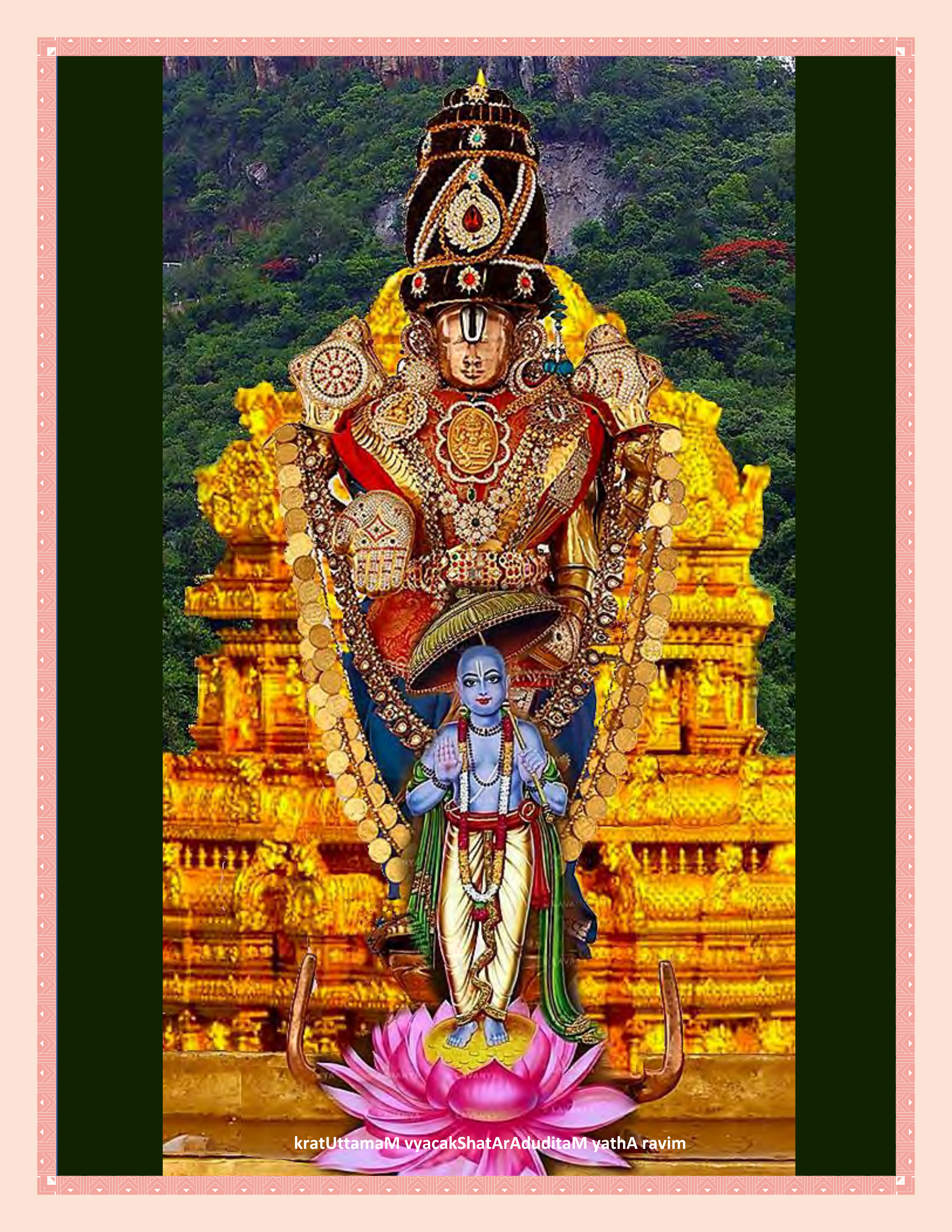
pasuram “kunRam yEnti kuLir mazhai kAttavan anRu j~nAlam aLanta pirAn paran senRu sEr tiruvE~NkaTa mAmalai onRumE tOzha nam vinai OyumE”. One does not even need to come to the Shrine of Lord Srinivasa on top of the Venkatam hill. Instead, a mere prostration to the hill itself will rid us of our sins. At the mention of the hill, Svami NammAzhvar is reminded of the KrishNa avataram reflected in the tribute “kunRam yEnti kuLir mazhai kAttavan” attesting to Lord Krishna holding aloft the Govardhana mountain on His little finger. By this act, Lord Krishna offered protection to all beings of Gokulam. The Azhvar enquires “Who is this Krishna?” and proceeds to answer this through the salutation “anRu j~nAlam aLanta pirAn” to denote the fact that He is none other than Trivikrama, who measured the entire universe with His giant feet. The tribute “pirAn” denotes the fact that the Lord gained a sense of completion. How did this come about? Entirely on account of protecting all beings of the universe that sought refuge at His feet without discrimination of any kind. Svami Desikan, literally picks up on the theme of the Azhvar’s glorification in this Daya Satakam verse through the salutation “prasakta madhunA vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH”. The exposition of the Vamana avataram itself is nothing new. However, no matter how many times one hears this from various expositions, one never ceases to be amazed by the extraordinary deeds accomplished in this avataram. Indra, the king of the Devas, had lost his kingdom and wealth to Bali Chakravarthi, the asura king. Resorting to prayers for Lord Narayana, Indra requested the restoration of his lost kingdom and wealth. When one loses something of value, one is beset by grief and constantly seeks a means to recover that which is lost. Not all are blessed with the perspective of Sri Kuresa, who gave up his eyes to uphold Bhagavad Ramanuja Darsanam. Prior to this, Sri Kuresa came from an extremely wealthy family. In the present day, it is common to invoke the usage “born with a silver spoon”. In this context it may be remembered that Sri Kuresa partook of meals from a golden plate. When Sri Kuresa, gave up residence in the village of Kooram in order to render kaimkaryam to Svami Bhashyakarar in Srirangam, his wife carried a golden plate along with her. It is common practice for one to hold on to a given vessel for performance of daily anushtanam (Trikala sandhyavandanam). Similarly, it was an accepted practice to partake of food from the same plate each day, while seated in the same place. In keeping with this practice, Sri Kuresa’s wife carried the golden plate along with her. While crossing a forest at night with Sri Kuresa, she was beset by fear. Sri Kuresa remarked “I am walking with bare hands and hence am free of worry. However, you seem to be carrying something heavy, which is the cause of your fear.” Saying thus, Sri Kuresa threw away the plate.



prasakta madhunA vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH

SrI Padmavati tAyAr in Trivikrama tirukkOlam

Not everyone is blessed with this exemplary vairagyam. Rather than regard the golden plate as a valuable that needs to be safeguarded, Sri Kuresa viewed it as a burden, which needed to be cast away. Only great mahans are capable of such dispassion. In the case of Indra, he certainly did not have this disposition. He was grieving intensely about his loss and submitted a prayerful appeal to Lord Narayana for restoring his lost wealth and kingdom. Lord Narayana assured Indra that this will be regained in due course. A salient point about Lord Narayana is that even if His supplicant is an ArdhrAparAdhi (egregious violator of the Sastraic commands and engaged in repeated acts of sin), he is forgiven and graced. Even if the supplicant exhibits a total lack of gratitude towards Lord Narayana after being the recipient of the Lord's grace through performance of Sharanagati, and engages in repeated acts of transgression, the Lord is not angered and thus does not punish the supplicant. Indra is a standing example of this fact. During the Krishna avataram, upon the killing of Narakasura, Lord Krishna restored the stolen ear-rings (Kundalam) to Aditi, the mother of Indra. While departing svarga lokam, Satyabhama desired to have the Parijata tree, which Krishna carried along with him. However, Indra could not bear the fact that Lord Krishna took the Parijata tree, totally forgetting the mahopakaram rendered by Krishna in ridding him of the menace of Narakasura. Despite this inherent nature of Indra, Lord Narayana overlooks these faults and bestows His grace upon Indra. This is the reason for the usage nambi/piran in Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruvaimozhi. Aditi, the mother of Indra, desired to have Lord Narayana as her son. In keeping with her desire, Lord Narayana incarnated as Vamana taking birth from the womb of Aditi. Sri Kuresa glorifies Bhagavan in the atimAnuSha sthavam tribute "shIlaH ka eSha tava hanta! Dayaikasindho! kShudre pR^ithagjanapade jagadaNDamadhye kShodhIyaso(a)pi hi janasya kR^ite kR^itI tvam atrAvatIrya nanu locana gocarobhUH". The salutation "atrAvatIrya nanu locana gocarobhUH" reflects the fact that Lord Narayana takes avatarams that can be seen by the eyes of a commoner. The reason for this is undoubtedly, the Lord's Daya as evidenced in the tribute "shIlaH ka eSha tava hanta! dayaikasindho!". That the Lord elects to incarnate in the midst of lowly people like us is entirely a tribute to the Lord's compassion (Daya) and His saushIlyam (namely, the Lord unmindful of His elevated status, choses to mingle with commoners without making a fuss) as reflected in the glorification "kShudre pR^ithagjanapade jagadaNDamadhye". This most compassionate Lord took birth in the womb of Aditi as Vamana with the sole purpose of gracing all beings of the universe. Vamana Jayanti is famously celebrated in Kerala as Onam. The Vamana avataram is described in SrImad BhAgavatam in the verse 8.18.5 an 8.18.6 as:


kratUttamaM vyacakShatArAduditaM yathA ravim

"shroNAyAM shravaNadvAdashyAM muhurta(a)bhijiti prabhuH sarve nakShatra tArAdyAshcakruH tajjanma dakShiNaM dvAdashyAM savitA tiShTan madhyandinagato nR^ipA vijayanAma sA proktA yasyAM janma vidurhareH" His incarnation came about in the month of Shravana (Aug 15-Septmber 14) in Shukla paksha dvAdashi, when the asterism of ShravaNam was in force. During shravaNa dvAdashi, fasting must be observed. It is jokingly observed that the times of incarnation of Bhagavan such as this result in starvation for us! The fast is broken the next day as per dvadashi kramam. In some traditions, the fast is broken in the evening of ShravaNa dvAdashi after the utsavam for Perumal is completed. Thus, the Vamana avataram took place on Shravana dvAdashi day. The Vamana avataram is further described in the SrImad BhAgavatam verse 8.18.12 as: "yat tad vapuH bhAti vibhUShaNAyudhaiH avyakta cit vyaktamadhArayaddhariH babhuva tenaiva sa vAmano vaTuH sampashyatoH divyagatiryathA naTaH". The divya mangala vigraham of the Lord, whose body is replete with shuddha satvam, adorned by dazzling weapons, decorated by various ornaments took birth as an ordinary Brahmin dwarf known as Vamana. This was an act staged by the Lord (naTan) forsaking His gigantic form to assume the form of a dwarf. This may be a novel technique for the film industry but has been perfected by the Lord well before the film industry came about.

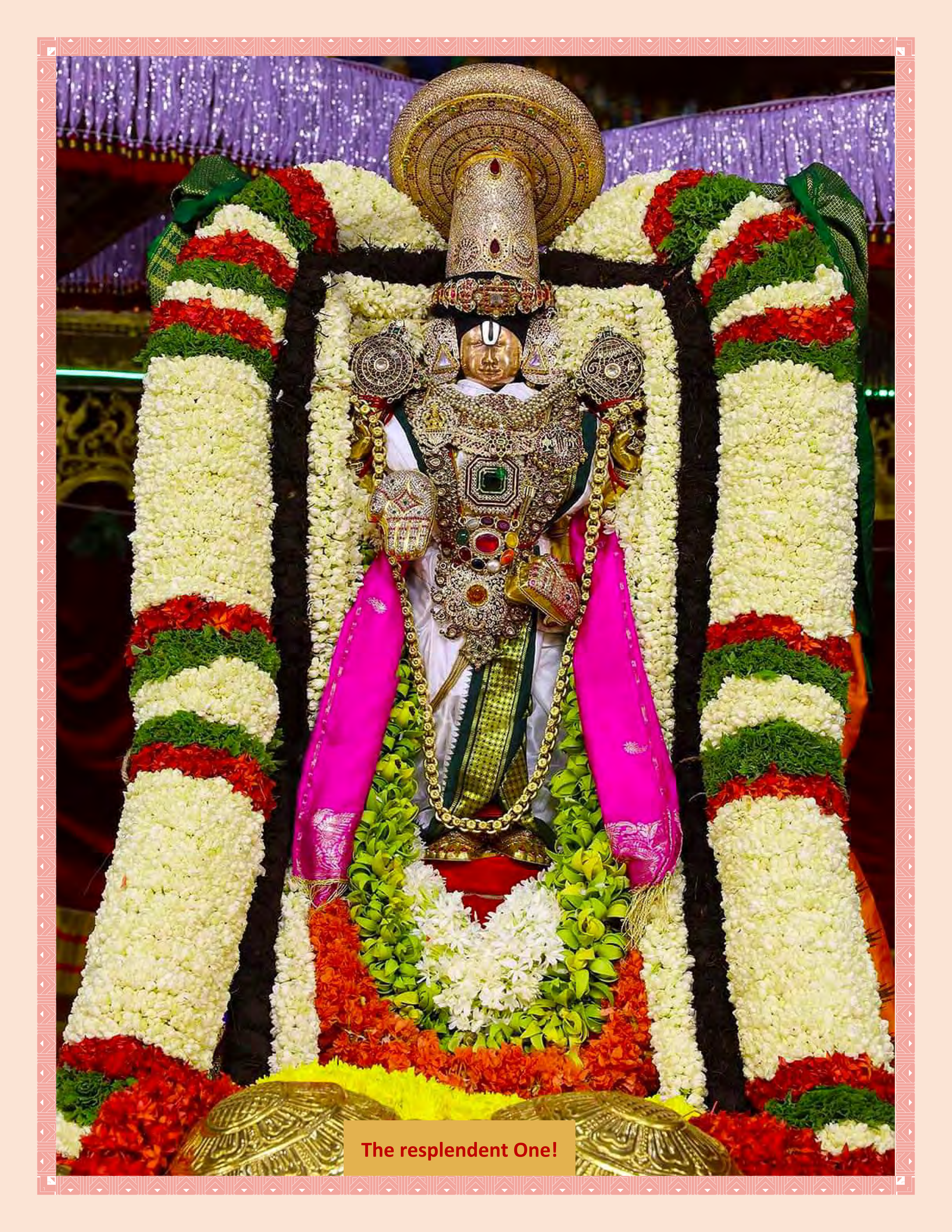
The verse (Srimad Bhagavatam Verse 8.18.13) "taM vaTuM vAmanaM dR^iShtvA modamAnA maharShayaH karmANi kArayAmasuH puraskR^itya prajApatim" describes the Vamana avataram further. Unlike the Krishna avataram, where every single act in His childhood was enjoyed with great relish and documented in great detail in scriptures like Bhagavata puranam and Vishnu puranam, only the birth of Vamana is mentioned and then the scriptures proceed to extol Vamana from His fifth year. Specifically, the samskaram that needed to be performed for Vamana was carried out by Maharishis with Prajapati at their head. For a Brahmana, the most important samskaram is upanayanam. This was undertaken with great enthusiasm by the Maharishis, with each one rendering a specific task. Brahmopadesham was performed by Savitri Devi as documented in the tribute "sAvitrIM savitA bravIt". The critical step in the upanayanam is the adorning of the sacred thread (yaj~nopavIta dhAraNam) for the Brahmachari. Here it may be asked who brought the sacred thread that adorned the Lord? It must be remembered that there are a number of prescriptions to be followed while preparing the sacred thread. This should be done prior to partaking of food. It should not be done during anadhyayana kAlam. Tuesday and Saturday are



prohibited for the purpose of stringing the sacred thread. In this manner a number of rules come into force for preparing the sacred thread. To this day, only a handful of people conform to all applicable rules for stringing the sacred thread. Adiyen's revered father was one of the few that followed this practice.

Recognizing that the Parama Purusha, Lord Narayana, was going to adorn Himself with the sacred thread, the task of preparing it was undertaken with great care by Bruhaspati, as documented in the tribute "bR^ihaspatiH brahma sUtram". "mekhalAM kashyapo (a)dadAt" reflects the fact that sage Kashyapa gave the munji or mekhala. It must be noted that there is a difference between the darbha grass and the munji. In the village of Navalpakam, there lived a Svami known as Agnihotram Svami. He was of an extremely sAtvic disposition. He always had a pleasant welcoming smile for all. If he knew that a Brahmachari was receiving the upanayana samskaram, he would at once string the sacred thread after completing his morning anushtanam. This was a practice that he continued even at an advanced age. The most important items that are required by a Brahmachari for the upanayanam are the sacred thread, the munji, krishNajinam (deerskin) and dandam (palasa leaf). The tribute "dadau kR^iShNajinaM bhUmiH daNDaM somo vanaspatiH" reflects the fact that Bhumidevi brings the KrishNajinam for Vamana,

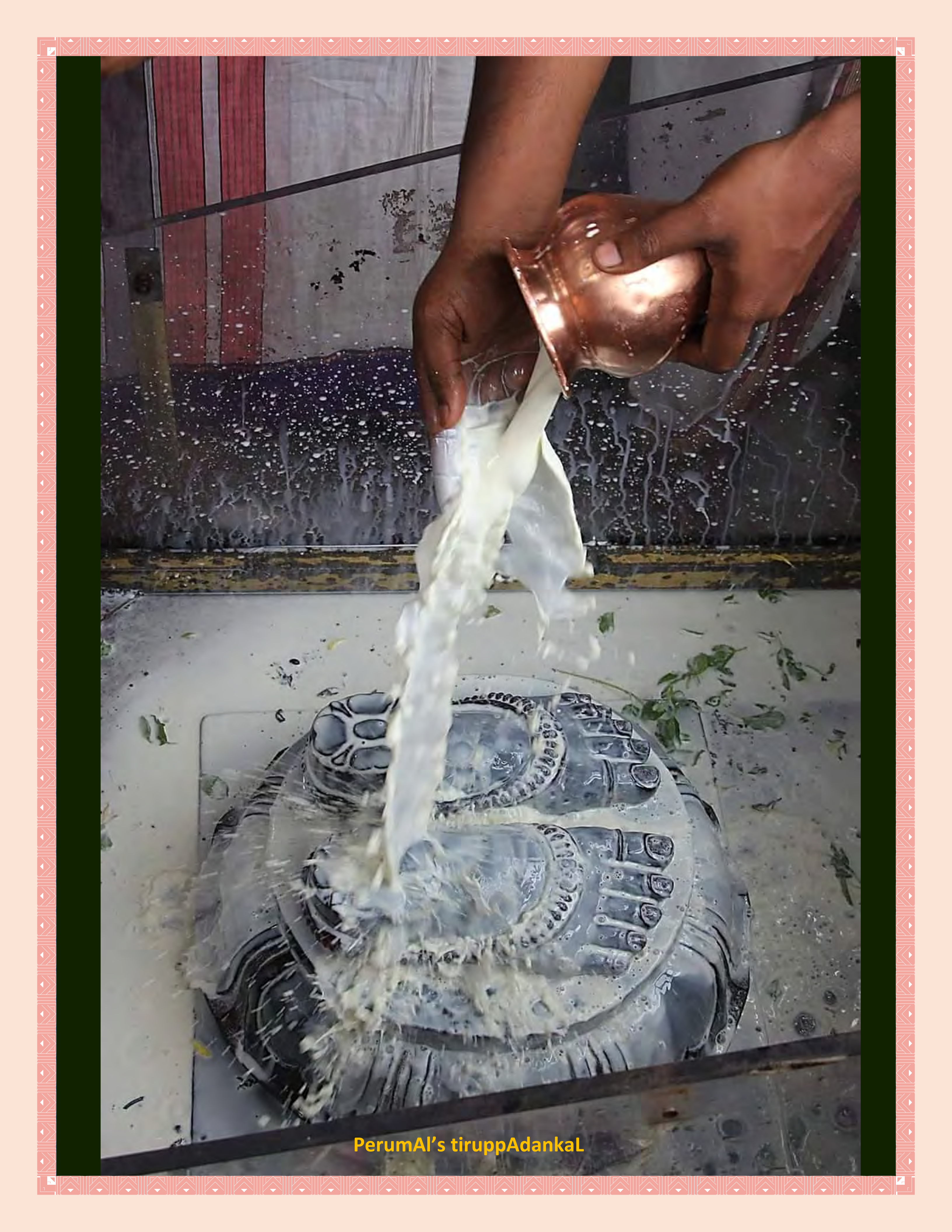
while the palasha dandam was brought by the Vanaspathi Devatha, Soma. Then comes the kaupInam, the inner garment that needs to be worn prior to adorning oneself with Vastram (veshti/dhothi). Only with the wearing of the koupinam does one become eligible to wear the sacred thread in upavItam mode. This kaupinam was given to Vamana by His mother, Aditi, while the sky brought Him an umbrella as documented in the tribute "kaupinAncChAdanaM mAtA dyaushcatraM jagatH pateH" The tribute "kamaNDalaM veda garbhaH kushAn saptariShayo daduH" documents the fact that the Kamandalu (water-bowl) was provided by the Veda purusha, while the sapta rishis gave Vamana the Kusha grass, while the salutation "akShamAlaM mahArAja sarasvatyavyayAtmanaH" describes the fact that the japa mala (garland of beads for japam) was conferred by Sarasvati. The glorification "tasmA ityupanItAya yakSharAT pAtrikAmadAt" documents the fact that Yaksharaja gave Vamana the bowl from which He could seek Bhiksha. It must be remembered that the rules of Brahmacharya Ashrama preclude one from earning wealth. This is the privy of gruhasthas only according to the shastras. Therefore, a Brahmachari is necessarily required to seek Bhiksha for his daily sustenance. This required a bowl, which was conferred by Yaksharaja. It is not enough to merely provide the bowl. When the Brahmachari, Vamana seeks Bhiksha, food must be on offer. This is reflected in the tribute "bhikShAM bhagavatI sAkShAdumAdAmbikA satI" that Uma Devi, the consort of Shiva, provided the Bhiksha. Even to this day during the performance of upanayanam, it is customary for the Brahmachari upon completion of the upanayana samskaram to seek alms from elders gathered at the ceremony. The first in this line is the Brahmachari's mother, from whom he seeks Bhikshai. When alms are sought with the utterance of "bhavati bhikShAM dehi", the mother gives the offering of rice and grain for the Brahmachari. While giving the Bhiksha, the mother also presents the Brahmachari with a kaupInam that has been rendered yellow by application of turmeric. Aditi, the mother of Vamana, gave Him the kaupInam. The salutation "sa brahmavarcasenaivaM sabhAM sambhAvito vaTuH brahmarShi gaNasanjuShTAmatyarocata mAriShaH" documents the fact that the Maharishis were vying with each other enthusiastically to be of service to Vamana during His upanayanam. This points to the fact that this was no ordinary Brahmachari, but instead it was the Supreme Being, Lord Narayana, who took on the form of the Brahmachari. It is common to see a little child engage in acts of playfulness. However, when adorned with the yello vastram (dhoti rendered yellow by application of turmeric), wearing the yaj~nopavitam, mekhalam, and carrying the palasha dandam, the Brahma tejas accompanying the child is unmistakably seen by all.



The resplendent One!

When this is the case for a normal child, what to speak of the Brahma varchas of Bhagavan, who had taken the form of a Brahmachari! He shone resplendently amidst the extraordinary personages assembled at His upanyanam. Upon completion of this samskaram, He immediately proceeded to the banks of the Naramada river, where Bali Chakravarthi, the asura king, was performing a yaagam. The arrival of Vamana at the yaagam of Bali is described in the Srimad Bhagavatam verse 8.18.21 "taM narmadAyAs taTa uttare baleH ya R^itvijaste bhR^igukacCha-sanj~nake pravartayanto bhR^igavaH kratUttamaM vyacakShatArAduditaM yathA ravim", (While engaged in performing the sacrifice in the field known as Bhrigukaccha, on the northern bank of the Narmada River, the brahminical priests, the descendants of Bhrigu, saw Vamana to be like the Sun rising nearby.) Immediately upon beholding Vamana, Bali Chakravarthy respectfully welcomes Him and offers argyam, pAdyam, and AchamanIyam. The welcoming of Vamana is captured in the Srimad Bhagavatam (verses 8.18.27 and 28) tributes "svAgatenAbhinandyAtha pAdau bhagavato baliH avanijyArcayAmAsa muktasa~Nga manoramam" and "tatpAda-shaucaM jana kalmaShApahaM sa dharmavin mUrdhnyadadhAt suma~Ngalam yad devadevo girishashcandra maulir dadhAra mUrdhnA parayA ca bhaktyA". The latter verse documents the glory of the Sripadha teertham of Vamana. It also instructs us in the procedure for receiving the Sripadha teertham. First, the Sripadha teertham must be accepted in one's hand and sprinkled on one's head. Only after this, does one partake of the water from the Sripadha teertham. Bali Chakravarthy respectfully sprinkled on his head the padhyam water from the offering to Vamana. In this context it must be remembered that Bali Chakravarthy was a Dharmavit (knowledgable in the ways of Dharma). Here the underlying message is that the padhyam waters from Vamana's feet rid one of all kinds of sins. Not only that, it also confers all auspiciousness. This is the water that is respectfully accepted on his head by Mahadeva, who bears on his head the crescent moon. In adiyen's younger days, adiyen followed the practice of accepting Sripadha teertham on important days as matter of routine. Only now does adiyen realize the significance. In the village of Navalpakkam, there lived mahan Acharya purushas like Ayya Devanathachariar Svami and Agnihotram Svami. If there was an important auspicious occasion in one's family, it was customary to invite these mahans and seek their blessings. Adiyen's revered father would fill his Sandhyavandana combu (bowl) with water and wait at the entrance of our home for the arrival of these mahans. When they arrived, he would respectfully wash their feet with the water from the bowl and perform pradakshiNam of these mahans. He would then respectfully receive on his head the water from the offering

to the feet of these mahans, in the same manner as outlined by Bali Chakravarthy. At that time, adiyen thought of it as a routine practice. However, only now after becoming familiar with the scripture that adiyen recognizes that our elders would not perform anything without scriptural support (PramANam). This is the sukshma (hidden) vishayam underlying the Dharmavit tribute from the Srimad Bhagavatam verse. Bali Chakravarthy again welcomes Vamana and then enquires how he can be of service. This is documented in the Srimad BhAgavatam (verse 8.18.29) tribute "svAgataM te namastubhyaM brahman kiM karavAma te brahmarShINAM tapaH sAkShAn manye tvArya vapurdharam" (Bali Chakravarthy addressed Vamana thus: O brAhmaNa, I offer You my hearty welcome and my respectful obeisances! Please let us know what we may do for You. We think of You as the personified austerity of the great brAhma rishis.) Bali Chakravarthy continued to extol Vamana further through the tribute "adya naH pitarastR^iptA adya naH pAvitaM kulam adya sviShTaH kraturayaM yad bhavAn Agato gR^ihAn". (O my Lord, because You have kindly arrived at our home, all my forefathers are satisfied, our family and entire dynasty have been sanctified, and the sacrifice we are performing is now complete because of Your presence.) Bali Chakravarthy then offers to grant whatever Vamana seeks. This is reflected in the tribute (SB Verse 8.18.32) "yad yad vaTo vAnChasi tat pratIcCha me tvAM arthinaM vipra sutAnutarkaye gAM kAncanaM guNavad dhAma mR^iShTaM tathAnna peyamuta vA vipra kanyAm grAmAn samruddhAmsturagAn gajAn vA rathAmstathArhattama sampratIcCha". (O son of a brahmaṇa, it appears that You have come here to ask me for something. Therefore, whatever You want You may take from me. O best of those who are worshipable. You may take from me a cow, gold, a furnished house, palatable food and drink, the daughter of a brahmaṇa for Your wife, prosperous villages, horses, elephants, chariots or whatever You desire.) Vamana was very pleased to hear the words of Bali Chakravarthy and expressed His happiness through the verse (SB 8.19.3) "na hyetasmin kule kashcin niH sattvaH kR^ipaNaH pumAn pratyAkhyAtA pratishrutya yo vAdAtA dvijAtaye". (I know that even until now, no one taking birth in your family has been poor-minded or miserly. No one has refused to give charity to brahmaNas, nor after promising to give charity has anyone failed to fulfill his promise.). Vamana then made His request of charity from Mahabali through the verse (SB 8.19.16) "tasmAt tvatto mahIm IShad vR^iNe(a)haM varadarShabhAt padAni trINi daityendra sammitAni padA mama". (O King of the Daityas, from Your Majesty, who come from such a noble family and who is able to give charity munificently, I ask only three paces of land, to the measurement of My steps.) This is also captured in the Azhvar tribute "nilam mavali mUvaDi".



PerumAl's tiruppAdankaL

Shukracharya, the acharya for Mahabali, was at the side of Mahabali conducting the yagam when Vamana made this request. He immediately advised Mahabali "This is a sukshmam of Bhagavan MahavishNu. You have been overpowered by His aura and speech and stand ready to grant Him anything. He is in fact on a mission to ensure your ruin." Bali then enquires of Shukracharya "I have promised to grant this Brahmin whatever he asks for. How is it possible for me to retract my words?" Shukracharya answered this thus: "You are a Dharmavit (well versed in the ways of Dharma). While giving things away in charity one must not wipe one's coffers clean. One must always keep in reserve what is needed for taking care of one's family." Shukracharya further instructs Bali Chakravarthy in the manner of performing charity through the verse (8.19.36) "na tad dAnaM prashamsanti yena vR^ittir vipadyate dAnaM yaj~nastapaH karma loke vR^ittimato yataH" (Learned scholars do not praise that charity which endangers one's own livelihood. Charity, sacrifice, austerity and fruitive activities are possible for one who is competent to earn his livelihood properly. They are not possible for one who cannot maintain himself. The underlying message is that charity should be undertaken only after ensuring there is enough for oneself and their family.) Shukracharya further instructs Mahabali in the nuances of undertaking charitable acts through the verse (SB 8.19.37) "dharmAya yashase(a)rthAya kAmAya svajanAya ca pancadA vibhajan vittaM ihAmutra ca modate" (One's wealth needs to be broken up into five parts - one for Dharma, second for gaining praise, third for opulence, fourth for gratification of one's desires, and the fifth for maintenance of family members. A person who accomplishes this is happy in this world and the next. Lord Vishnu stands ready to deprive you of all your belongings. Therefore, do not fall for His words of praise.) Mahabali enquires of Shukracharya "I have promised this Brahmachari the gift of three paces of land measured by His feet. If I go back on this word, would I not be branded as a liar? This is unacceptable to me." Shukracharya further advises Mahabali through the verse (SB 8.19.43) "strIShu narma-vivAhe ca vR^ittyarthe prANa-sa~NkaTe gobrAhmaNArthE hiMsAyAM nAnR^itaM syAjjugupsitam" (It is absolutely correct that one should not lie. However, in some instances such as flattering a woman to bring her under control, on the occasion of marriage ceremonies, for earning one's livelihood, when one's life is in danger or to protect cows and Brahmins, and protecting a person from enemies lying is never frowned upon. In this instance great harm is about to come about for you. Therefore, there is nothing wrong in going back on your promise.) Mahabali responded to this instruction from Shukracharya through the verse (SB 8.20.3) "sa cAhaM vitta lobhena pratyAcakShe kathaM dvijam pratishrutya

dadAmIti prahlAdiH kitavo yathA". (I am the grandson of Prahlada. How can I withdraw my promise because of greed for money when I have already said that I shall give this land? How can I behave like an ordinary cheater, especially toward a brahmaNa? Therefore, I must grant this Brahmana His request at any cost.) Thus, as per Vamana's request Mahabali agreed to grant the three paces of land measured by Vamana's feet. The anubhavam of Svami NammAzhvar from the Tiruvaimozhi is recalled here in the pasuram "Azhi ezha cankum villum ezha tisai vAzhi ezha taNDum vALum ezha aNDam mOzhai ezha muDi pAtam ezha appan Uzhi ezha ulakam koNDavArE". With the right foot Vamana, who grew into the giant form of Trivikrama, measured the entire earth including the nether regions. With His left foot, He covered the upper world. There needed to be space to place the third pace. Mahabali offers his head as the place for the Lord's third pace. It must be remembered that as Vamana grew into the gigantic form of Trivikrama, all things associated with Him like the shankam, chakram, the various rekhas adorning His feet and the like morphed into a fittingly large form. This is gleaned from the Azhvar anubhavam. Svami Desikan echoes the same sentiment in the Dehalisha stuti salutation "bhaktapriya tvayi tathA parivardhamAne muktAvitAnavitatistava pUrvamAsIt hAravaLiH paramatho rashanAkalApaH tAragaNastadanu mauktikanUpurashrIH" (When Bhagavan began to expand, there was the sky replete with stars and was above the Lord. As He grew into a gigantic form, this became a garland for His neck. As He became even larger, the sky with stars become the cloth adorning His stomach region. Finally, when he stopped growing, the sky with stars became the anklet adorning His foot.) Svami Desikan further glorifies the Trivikrama avataram in verse 13 of the Dehalisha stuthi through the tribute "bhaktoparodhasaha pAda sarojataste mandAkinI vigaLitA makarandadhAra sadyastrivargamapavargamapi kSharantI puNya babhUva purashAsana mauLimAlA" (In the process of covering the entire universe, the left foot of Trivikrama reached the Brahma lokam. The four-faced Brahma was astonished by this act of the Lord. This was due to the fact that he received the grace of Lord Narayana in a most unexpected manner. It is in the manner of one knowledgable in the Vedas being granted an unexpected darsanam of the Lord's Utsava murti at their doorstep. Accordingly, Brahma took his Kamandalu - the water-vessel used for sandhyavandanam - and started performing abhishekam to the foot of Trivikrama.) The Rg Vedam documents the act of Trivikrama through the salutation (Rg Veda 1.22.18) "trINipadA vicakrame viShNurgopa adAbhyaH" Hence, He came to known as Trivikrama. An important sukshmam (hidden message) needs to be observed in this context.


Ravi Varma

Why did the Lord have to measure the universe with His feet? The shastram dictates that when charity is performed, that which is given away needs to be measured by both the giver as well as the recipient. For example, when one undertakes the performance of a Prayaschittham, the charity that is given has to be measured by the giver. The recipient too must count what comes his way. In the context of the Trivikrama avataram, Mahabali promised to give 3 paces of land as measured by Vamana's feet. The recipient, Trivikrama, too accepted it by actually measuring the gift of three paces. As the Lord's foot grew and reached Brahma lokam, Brahma, known as Vidhi, was delighted and engaged in performance of Tirumanjanam for the Lord's foot in accordance with the shastras. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, the tribute "(tvam) vidhi praNihitaiH" refers to the fact that the Sripadha teertham for Trivikrama was performed in accordance with the shastrams through the recitation of the Purusha suktam. Thus, submitting the relevant portion of the four vedams, Brahma undertook the performance of the abhishekam for the foot of Trivikrama. This resulted in "prasakta madhunA" (the waters from the Sripadha teertham became the nectarine offering of honey) as documented in the present Daya Satakam verse. Here the question of honey emanating from the feet of Lord Narayana arises. This is definitely true since the lotus feet of Lord Narayana have makarandham bearing honey. It is only from the flower that the bees deliver honey to various places. Therefore, the source of the honey is the lotus feet of Lord Narayana. The Lord's feet are glorified in the Rg Vedam through the salutation "viShNoH pade parame madhva utsaH" attesting to the fact that sweet tasting honey emanates from the feet of Lord Narayana. How does the honey flourish at the feet of Lord Narayana? It is entirely on account of Daya Devi. A mother upon beholding her new born child instinctively seeks to feed the child with breast milk. In a like manner, a cow instantly yields milk upon beholding its calf. In a like manner, the sweet tasting honey has an uninterrupted flow from the feet of Lord Narayana when He beholds those who have surrendered to Him. The previous Daya Satakam verse documented the Daya Devi's act of compassion through the salutation "dhanujaDimba dattastana". Here Svami Desikan builds upon that train of thought and describes the flow of breast milk in the form of sweet tasting honey emanating from the feet of Lord Narayana. The important message to be noted here is that in the previous verse, Daya Devi entered the eyes of Bhagavan Narasimha (tirumukham), whereas in this verse, Daya Devi takes root in the feet (Tiruvadi) of Trivikrama. The tribute "vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH" refers to the sripadha teertham offered by Brahma. Here it may be observed even at the present time that no matter how long the

Tirumanjanam water for Lord Srinivasa is preserved, it never spoils. This is a vishesham for Lord Srinivasa. The Tirumanjanam for Lord Srinivasa takes place every Friday. It is indeed a Bhagyam to witness this event. It is an even greater Bhagyam to receive the Tirumanjana teertham. The water offered by Brahma as Sripadha teertham has another important characteristic as documented in the tribute "samasta duritacChidA nigama gandhinA tvaM daye". That is, this water is capable of destroying all our sins. The manner of partaking of the Sripadha teertham is outlined in the verse "etat samasthapApanAM prayashcittaM manIShiNAH prAshanaM bhagavad bhakta pAdodaka nishevaNam" The inner meaning is that the Sripadha teertham from Acharyas destroys all our sins. This is the implication of the tribute "samasta duritacChidA". Another point of importance is that the nectarine offering of honey arising from the feet of Lord Narayana is delectable. It is capable of destroying all our sins. However, even greater is the Sripadha teertham from Acharyas. The salutation "nigama gandhinA" describes the fact that the fragrance of the Lotus feet of Lord Narayana is that of the Vedam. A flower usually exudes a fragrance. In the context of the Lotus-feet of Lord Narayana is that of the Vedam. Additional tributes such as "AmnAya ganDhi ruditasphuritAdharoShTham" from the Gopala Vimshati and "velAtIta shruti parimaLaM vedhasAM maulisevyaM" from the Bhagavad Dhyana Sopanam document the fact that Lord Narayana's feet are replete with the fragrance of the Vedam. When it comes to the fragrance of commonly encountered flowers, one may undertake a comparison and say that the fragrance from one flower is better than that of another. However, when it comes to the fragrance from the feet of Lord Narayana, it is matchless since there is nothing that can compare with the Vedam. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, the Sripadha teertham performed by Brahma with the recitation of the Purusha suktam and all four vedams, is in the form of a nectarine offering of honey, replete with the fragrance of the Vedam and destroys all our sins. The tribute "tvam daye" "a~njanAdrI shituH sharaNa pa~Nkajena a~Nkitam" from this Daya Satakam verse carries an important message. This is further exposited in the salutation "asheSham avisheShataH carAcaram acIkara trijagat". These denote the fact that all sentient and insentient beings in the three worlds great or otherwise, were graced with the touch of the feet of of Lord Narayana, leaving behind an imprint so to speak. This was entirely on account of Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi is responsible for all beings great or otherwise to be blessed with the contact with the feet of Trivikrama, which exude the fragrance of the Vedam and the Sripadha Teertham for which was offered by Brahma accompanied by the rendition of the Purusha Suktam and the

four vedams. The Sripadha teertham destroys all their sins. Thus, Daya Devi performs the exalted task of securing the sambandham of Lord Narayana's feet for all beings without discrimination of any kind.

The Trivikrama avataram is replete with a number of sUkshmam (hidden) messages. These are literally limitless. They are also hard to comprehend unless gained from a qualified Acharya. Lord Narayana is sarvaj~nan (all-knowing), sarvashaktimAn (all powerful). Furthermore, He is capable of accomplishing anything by His mere will (sankalpam). When this is the case, why did He have to lower His stature to that of a Brahmachari dwarf and seek alms from Mahabali- even if it be for the purpose of protecting those who have sought refuge in Him? This is a question raised by Sri Kuresa and documented in the Sundarabahu Stavam tribute "kShitiriyaM janisamhR^itipAlanaiH nigiriNodgiraNoddharaNairapi vanagirIsha tavaiva satI kathaM varada vAmana bhikShaNamarhati" (Oh Lord! You are the cause of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the entire universe without a doubt. Not only that during the time of praLayam, You bear in Your stomach all sentient and insentient beings of all the worlds in their subtle state. You are the one that bears the earth along with all its inhabitants. Furthermore, when the earth was submerged in the ocean, You relieved the earth of Her distress and restored Her to the original state in Your incarnation as Varaha. The tribute is for the Lord of Tirumaliruncholai, who is addressed as Varada. varam dadAti iti varada denotes the fact that He grants His seekers all they seek and more. Varada of such exalted stature here adopted the form a dwarf Brahmachari and sought alms from Mahabali. Is it appropriate for You to beg for alms?) In the AtimAnuSha stavam, Sri Kuresa further elaborates on this fact through the verse "tvannirmitA jaTharagA ca tava trilokI kiM bhikShaNAdhiyamR^ite bhavatA durApA madhye kadA tu na vicakramiShe jagaccet tvadvikramaiH kathamiva shrutirAncitAsyAt". (The Vedam declared that Bhagavan took the avataram of Trivikrama. The Vedam is never false or wrong. Therefore, is it possible that the Lord took the Vamana avataram to uphold the position of the Vedam. "vicakrame pR^ithivim eSha etAM kShetrAya viShNur manuShe dashasyAn" (Rg Veda 7.100.4) "trINi padA vicakrame viShNurgopa adAbhyaH" (Rg Veda 1.22.18) are the Vedam salutations that become relevant in this context. In order to uphold these statements, Lord Narayana incarnated as the dwarf Brahmachari. This is the position of Sri Kuresa. Another instance from the Srimad Ramayanam becomes relevant here. During the war with Ravana, Indrajith renders Rama and Lakshmana unconscious with the use of the Brahmastra. When they both fell to the ground, Indrajith concluded that Rama and Lakshmana had met their end.



The Divine Mother feels happy to see Her Children bearing the auspicious tilakam of the Lotus Feet of Her Lord!

Ravana, who was anxious to provide proof of the end of Rama and Lakshmana to Sita, orders that She be taken in the Pushpaka Vimanam to the battle field to see for Herself. Sita Devi is accompanied by Trijata, the daughter of Vibhishana, in the Pushpaka vimanam. Upon beholding the fallen forms of Rama and Lakshmana, Sita Devi is overcome by grief and laments that prior to being abducted by Ravana, She had visited numerous Maharishis at their Ashramams and had been blessed with dhIrga saumangalyatvam (long married life with husband), which has now been rendered false. Hearing this, Trijata calms Sita Devi with the statement that the only sumangalis can enter the Pushpaka Vimanam. Therefore, the words of the Maharishis are not false and that Sita Devi can rest assured that Rama and Lakshmana are alive. Thus, Sri Kuresa submits that in the same vein as Sita Devi submitted a prayer to uphold the words of the Maharishi, Lord Narayana incarnated as Trivikrama to uphold the words of the Vedam.

It must also be borne in mind that each incarnation of Lord Narayana comes about due to the efforts of Daya Devi. In fact, every act of the Lord comes about only due to the instigation of Daya Devi. Daya Devi is the mother of the universe. She loves to see Her children bathed well and adorned with good clothes, ornaments and bearing auspicious marks of tilakam. This motherly love for all sentient and insentient beings of the universe manifests in Her desire and subsequent action to ensure that all of them without exception beget contact with Lord Srinivasa's feet and are blessed with a resulting imprint of the Lord's feet, which serves as collyrium so to speak. Daya Devi begets delight upon beholding this unique "alankaram" (decoration) for Her children. This is reflected in the tributes "a~njanAdrI shituH" (the Ishvaran or Lord for Anjanam-collyrium) and "carAcaram acIkara sharaNa pa~Nkajena a~Nkitam". In present time, there is a mould that allows convenient application of various tilakams. The mould is usually dipped in collyrium and applied to young children. This provides the mark of a perfect geometric form. Specifically, Daya Devi ensures that all sentient and insentient beings of the universe are blessed with the touch of the Lord's Lotus feet, which leaves behind an imprint of a perfect geometric form, much in the same manner as the mould used for application of collyrium. Daya Devi derives great pleasure upon beholding Her children decorated with the imprint of the Lord's lotus feet. One may ask, what is so unique and great about gaining contact with the Lord's feet. This is the ultimate goal of every Srivaishnava - gaining contact with the Lord's lotus feet. Svami NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "emmA vITTu tiramum ceppam nin cem mA pAta parpu talai cErtollai kaimmA tunpam kaDinta pirAnE amma aDiyEn vENDuvatItE" (This decad of 10 verses documents the glory

of Lord Narayana's feet. Lord Narayana is pleased with the Azhvar's tribute and offers to bless the Azhvar with Moksham. Svami NammAzhvar enquires "What is it that I get in moksham?". Lord Narayana answers "Freedom from hunger, thirst, sleep, freedom from karma, satya kama, satya sankalpa - the ability to exist as per one's will and desire". The Azhvar responds that if this is the case, he does not desire moksham. "Why so?" enquires Lord Narayana. Svami NammAzhvar declares "I do not desire moksham, merely because You grant it with the view of making me happy. On the other hand, as a consequence of moksham, if I beget the opportunity of Kaimkaryam for Your feet that is much more lasting and pleasurable than that I am rendering at present, I shall gladly accept Your offer.") In the context of para-Bhakti, para j~nAna, and parama Bhakti, the Azhvar's response denotes parama Bhakti. This is the manner of undertaking actions that give Lord Narayana extreme pleasure. The tributes "cem mA pAta parpu talai cErtollai" "ammA aDiyEn vENDuvatItE" reflect the fact that the Azhvar's sole desire is to be graced with the touch of Lord Narayana's lotus feet. In keeping with this prayer of the Azhvar, it has become a cornerstone of Srivaishnava tradition to grace all Bhaktas on their head with the Sri Satari. This Sri Satari sevai confers the contact with Lord Narayana's feet. It is this contact with Lord Srinivasa's feet that Daya Devi ensures for "Her children"- all sentient and insentient beings of the universe. This is captured in the tributes "carAcaram" and "sharaNa pa~Nkajena a~Nkitam" of this Daya Satakam verse. Another important implication of the imprint of the Lord's lotus feet is the fact that valuables are usually safeguarded by the use of a seal. In this context, all sentient and insentient beings of the universe are the property of Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi ensures their protection by ensuring that they beget the seal from the imprint of the Lord Srinivasa's feet. It is also important to note the usage "vidhi praNihitaiH saparyodakaiH" from this Daya Satakam verse. The gigantic form of Trivikrama measured the entire earth and nether regions with one foot. The second pace covered all the upper regions including Brahma lokam. Upon beholding the sacred foot of Trivikrama, Brahma performed tirumanjanam accompanied by the recitation of the Purusha Suktam. This is an important instruction for the worship of Lord Narayana. Even in our homes, while performing tirumanjanam for the Sri Murti (salagramam), it is customary to recite the Purusha suktam. Even though it is sufficient to perform this by mere recitation of the AshtAkshara mantram, rendition of the Purusha suktam at this time is recommended since it is extremely sacred. Even in temples, the abhishekam for Lord Narayana commences with the rendition of the Upanishad. However, when water is offered through the Sahasra Dhara, the Purusha Suktam is recited.



Each incarnation of Lord Narayana comes about due to the efforts of Daya Devi

In the context of Brahma performing the Tirumanjanam for Trivikrama's foot, the water from this offering was collected by the Meru mountain in the form of a receptacle. This was done in order to ensure the availability of the SripAdha teertham for all eternally. This water offering became the Ganga river. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Trivikrama avataram with the sole objective of making available the Ganga river to all comers to cleanse them of their sins. This completes our exposition of the Trivikrama avataram and the elevated role of Daya Devi to undertake this incarnation."



We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharia Svamin “Lord Srinivasa walked on that fateful day to the sacrificial arena of King Mahabali, a haughty victor of his era. The Lord was a short statured Brahmachari boy, a lovely form for us to fondle. Standing before the king, He respectfully asked for three paces of land as measured by His feet. When anyone made a request it is not for Mahabali to ask “why?” since he was a generous giver. Indeed Lord Srinivasa exploits the virtue in us to enslave us to Him! After some initial objections from his Acharya, the King agreed, poured the ceremonial waters on the right palm and said “Yes. Please take it. I have given. (It must be noted that Bali had conquered the three worlds that belonged to Indra through victory in his battle with the latter). The next moment a mammoth form was assumed by the Lord. The right foot extended all over-horizontally. There was nothing outside it. The left foot went up, protruding till it reached Brahma lokam. Brahma is almost a child like the asura child, Prahlada, of the previous verse. He rejoiced, performed tirumanjanam with fragrant holy water to the left foot to the accompaniment of Vedic mantras. That water flowed down with torrential force, which was received on the matted locks of Rudra, and then flowed to the earth as the river Ganga. However, that is a different story. The way the Lord set His two feet, He had touched, physically, so to use in a popular language, all in the universe. All without an exception, in the whole lot of the movables and immovables in all the three worlds (so to say in the customary manner), were affixed a seal, with the lotus foot of the Lord.

This is what you, Oh Daya Devi! wished for. What is the meaning? All without a single exception, devas, asuras, men, other beings, and all else are the property of Lord Srinivasa. They have now been labeled, sealed, with the Lord’s Foot as the official seal. That is a great elevation for them. You wanted it! This seal of acknowledgment as the Dasa, Sesha (servant) of Lord Srinivasa, is a great recognition for us. You achieved this! There is no discrimination, partiality, or superficiality of any kind.”

Another commentator, Sri U.Ve. Dindigal Ramaswamy Svamin, describes this as the dazzling crown jewel for Daya Devi and maintains that this is the most impressive verse from this decad.



Slokam 86

परश्वथ तपोधन प्रथन सत्क्रतूपाकृत
क्षितीश्वर पशु क्षरत्क्षतज कुङ्कुम स्थासकैः ।
वृषाचल दयालुना ननु विहर्तुमालिप्यथाः
निधाय हृदये दये निहत रक्षितानां हितम् ॥ ८६ ॥

parashvatha tapodhana prathana satkratUpAkR^ita
kShitIshvara pashu kSharatkShataja ku~Nkuma sthAsakaiH|
vR^iShAcala dayALunA nanu vihartum AlipyathAH
nidhAya hR^idaye daye nihata rakShitAnAM hitam||86

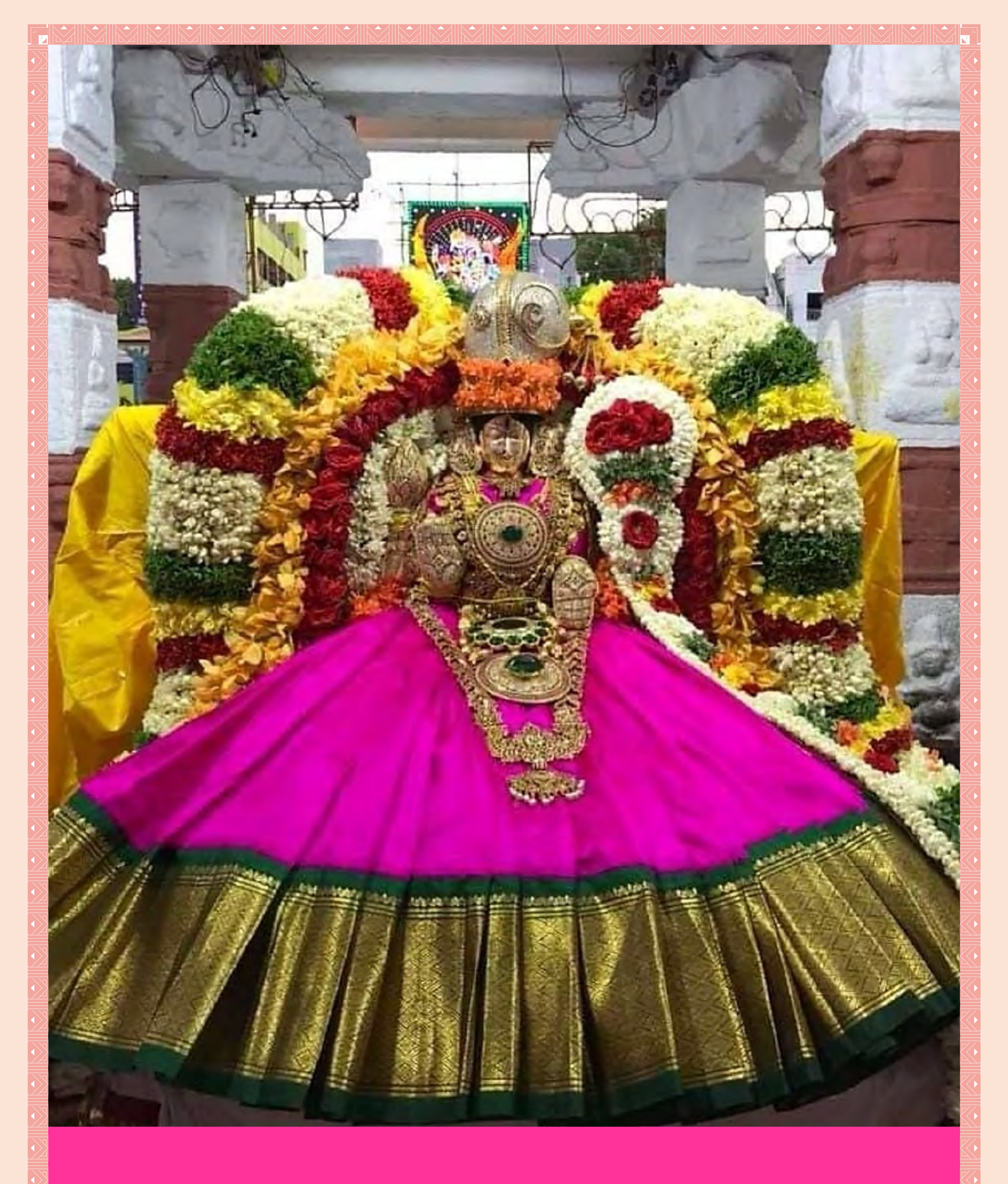


We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The slokams of this decad until now explicitly document the role of Daya Devi in each incarnation of Lord Narayana. However, in the Parashurama avataram, the role of Daya Devi is hard to discern. The actions in this avataram reflect extreme cruelty with a ruthlessness. How then can the avataram of Parashurama become an undertaking of Daya Devi? It has been established that all actions of Lord Narayana become the consequence of Daya Devi's instigation. In this vein, the avataram of Parashurama is also due to the act of Daya Devi. How can this be so? Will Daya Devi agree to an act of cruelty on the part of Lord Narayana? Will Lord Narayana Himself come to terms with this? These questions are answered in the present Daya Satakam verse, which is "parashvatha tapodhana prathana satkratUpAkR^ita kShitIshvara pashu kSharatkShataja ku~Nkuma sthAsakaiH vR^iShAcala dayALunA nanu vihartum AlipyathAH nidhAya hR^idaye daye nihata rakShitAnAM hitam". In Daya Satakam Verse 25 it has been documented that "avikalpamanugrahaM duhAnAM bhavatImeva daye bhajanti santaH" to reflect that the fact that Daya Devi is forever replete with unconditional anugraham, that is never subject to change, never exhibits partiality, or never has an ulterior motive. However, Svami Desikan describes the act of Parashurama in annihilating twenty one generations of Kshatriyas in the Dashavatara Stotram verse "triHsaptakR^itvaH kShitim". How could this act be motivated by Daya Devi? In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan affirms that this is very much an act of Daya Devi. Parashurama was

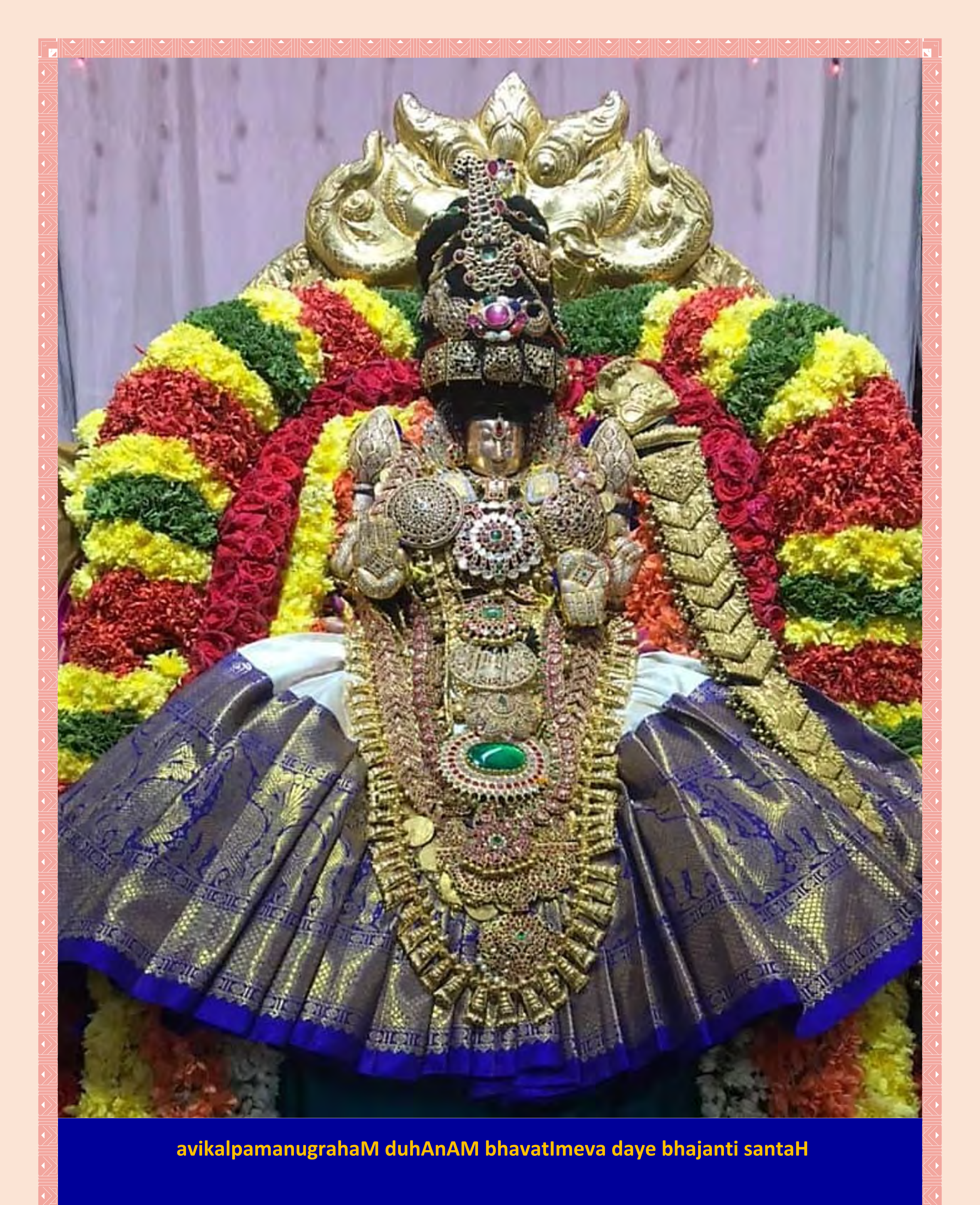


born as the son of Jamadagni and Renuka. Renuka was an extremely devout wife and exemplified pativratham. Most women in those days carried along with them a pot while going out to bathe in a lake or pond and collect water for daily aradhanam. However, Renuka would not carry a pot. Instead, due to her pativratham, the sand on the banks of the lake would transform itself into a pot, which she would use to bring the water for daily aradhanam. Once while traversing a forest on the way to a lake for her bath, she encountered an extremely handsome person. Renuka saw this man and thought that he is good looking. Otherwise, there was no change in her pativratha disposition. As per her usual practice, she performed snanam in the lake and set about making a pot out of the sand on the banks of the lake. However, despite her best efforts the pot would not form. After trying for a long time, she gave up and returned to the Ashramam of Jamadagni with an empty hand. Through his j~nAna dR^iShTi, Jamadagni was able to discern the cause of Renuka returning without water. Her beholding the handsome man caused a breach of her pativratha nature and hence the pot could not be formed from the sand. This greatly angered Jamadagni, who summoned his sons and instructed them to behead Renuka. The other sons of Jamadagni refused but Parashurama unquestioningly followed the orders of Jamadagni. Subsequently, Parashurama pleaded to Jamadagni for the restoration of his mother's life and submitted a prayer that Jamadagni should regard her in the same manner as before. Jamadagni was extremely pleased with this request and brought back Renuka to life. The cause of Jamadagni's death was a Kshatriya king, Kartaviryarjuna. One day Kartaviryarjuna arrived at the Ashramam of Jamadagni. At that time Jamadagni was engaged in Tapas and did not take note of the king's arrival. The king and his retinue were slighted by this act and at the prompting of the king his henchmen killed Jamadagni. In order to avenge the killing of Jamadagni by the Kshatriya king, Kartaviryarjuna, Parashurama took upon himself the task of exterminating twenty one generations of Kshatriyas. Using the blood of these slain Kshatriyas, Parashurama performed tarpaNam for his ancestors. It must be borne in mind that the Parashurama avataram came about due to the Lord's Avesham (arising from anger). Daya Devi, who is none other than Mahalakshmi Thayar as documented in Verse 6 of Daya satakam through the tribute "samasta jananIm vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm", is a personification of anugraham as evidenced by the Yatiraja Saptati tribute "anugrahamayIM vande nityaM aj~nAta nigrahAm". When this is the disposition of Daya Devi, how then could one account for the extremely cruel act of destruction of twenty-one generations of Kshatriyas in the Parashurama avataram? The



anugrahamayIM vande nityaM aj~nAta nigrahAm

reconciliation for this comes about from the Manu Smriti (8.318) tribute "rAjabhiH kR^ita daNDAs tu kR^itvA pApAni mAnavAH nirmalAH svargamAyAnti santaH sukR^itinO yathA" (A certain person commits a crime for which he is punished by the king. Just like a pure soul attains svarga lokam as result of his good acts, the subject punished by the king is reformed into a good person and attains svargam in a like manner. Therefore, in this case even the punishment resulted in something good for the punished.) Thus, as far as Lord Narayana is concerned what is commonly viewed as punishment ultimately results in a good state for the subject that is being punished. In the context of the Parashurama avataram, the tribute "parashvatha tapodhana prathana satkratUpAkR^ita kShitIshvara pashu kSharatkShataja ku~Nkuma sthAsakaiH" from this Daya Satakam verse indicates that the great tapasvi Parashurama, whose weapon was the axe undertook the performance of a yagam (sacrifice). For any yagam, there needs to be a Pashu (animal) that is offered as bali. With respect to the Yagam performed by Parashurama, the sacrificial Pashu was constituted by the twenty-one generations of Kshatriyas. The act of offering the Pashu in sacrifice is not himsa (violence). Instead the Pashu begets residence in svarga lokam. In keeping with the sAmanya shAstra declaration "ma himsyAt sarva bhUtAni" one must adopt a disposition of total non-violence towards all beings except the yAga pashu. Even the seemingly cruel killing of the pashu in the yagam is not an act of violence. Instead, it is a great anugraham bestowed upon the animal. The sacrificial animal is tied to a pillar known as the yUpa stambham in the yAga shAla (the venue for the yagam). It is indeed a rare bhAgyam to witness the performance of yagam in the traditional manner. In the present day, there has been a steady decline in the performance of yagams as well as their frequency. After tying the yaga pashu to the yupa stambha, the performer of the sacrifice (yajamana) and the adhvaryu (the priest who helps with the performance of the sacrifice) recite majestic mantrams from the Vedam. One of the mantrams rendered at this time is "na uve tan mR^iyate karishyati devAgam idehi tadibhistutebhiH" The pashu is decorated with turmeric and vermillon, while being adorned with a new vastram. One may ask is this the final act of goodness before the killing of the animal. The Veda mantram above answers this. The verbatim meaning of this mantram is that "the sacrificial animal is not killed. Instead it attains residence in svarga lokam as a consequence of being offered in sacrifice. It is not an act of violence. On the other hand, the sacrificial animal begets the same benefit as the performer of the sacrifice and therefore should not be viewed as a merciless act." This is not only for the sacrificial animal but also for the next of kin (mother, father, siblings, and friends) to the animal as



avikalpamanugrahaM duhAnAM bhavatImeva daye bhajanti santaH

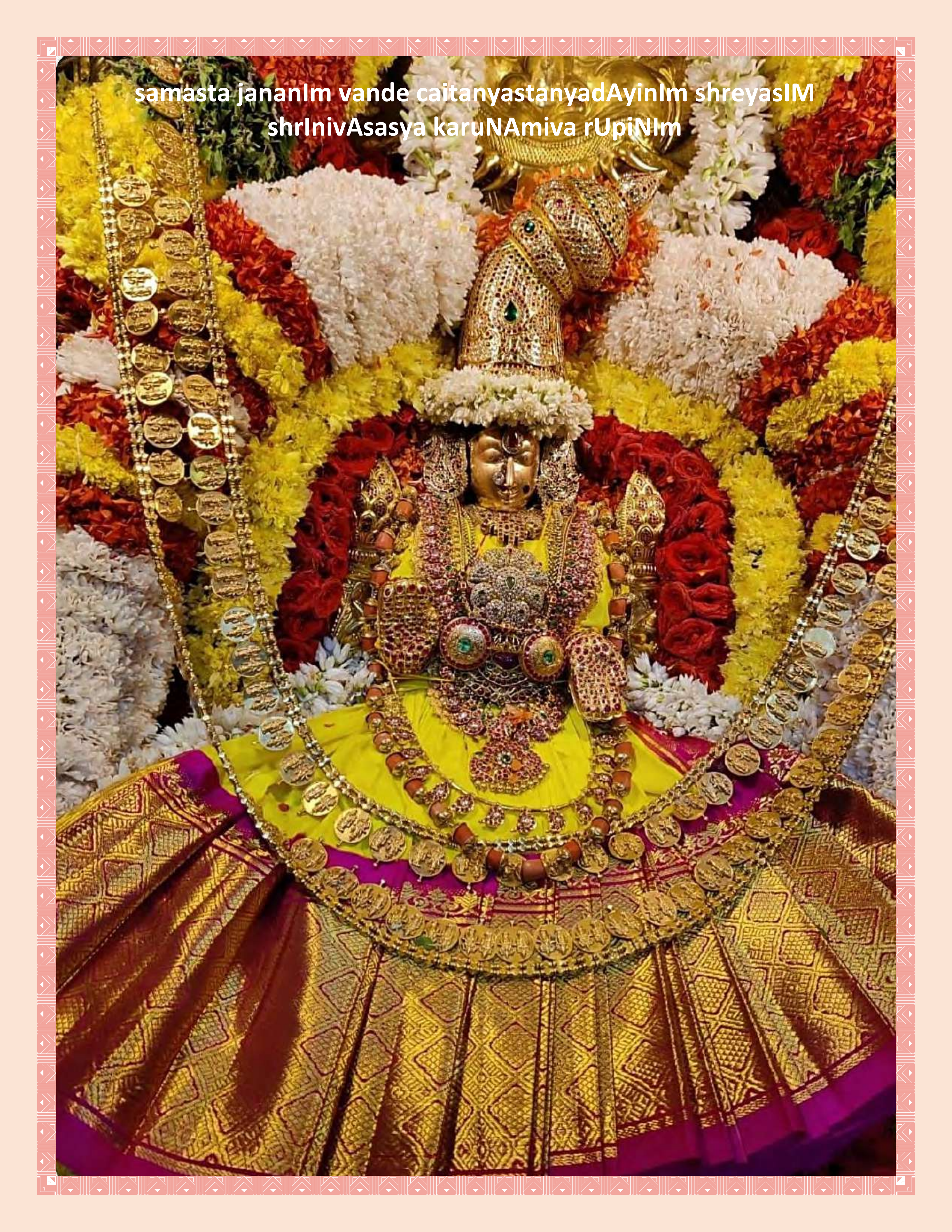
documented in the Veda mantram "anupitAnubhrAtha sahabhyonu sakhA sayUjyaH" There are male and female species of the sacrificial animal (goat and sheep). The female usually gives birth to multiple offspring. The meaning of this Veda mantram is that the mother, father, siblings, and friends of the animal beget the same state as that of the sacrificial animal - namely residence in svarga lokam. Therefore, the purpose of the sacrifice is to ensure that the animal begets an elevated state and is not meant for the destruction of the animal. In a like manner, for the yagam of Parashurama, the kshatriyas of the earth served the role of the pashu. Thus, it was an act of anugraham by Parashurama for the Kshatriyas. Who is the cause for this sacrifice? Svami Desikan answers this in the tribute "vR^iShAcala dayALunA", reflecting the fact that it was performed by the kind hearted one, who resides on top of the Venkatam hill (Lord Srinivasa). This gives rise to a question as to how could the merciless killing undertaken in the Parashurama avataram be an act of the kind-hearted Lord Srinivasa? This is answered in a subsequent tribute of the Daya Satakam verse "nihata rakShitAnAM hitam" namely, the killing of the kshatriyas itself was a form of protection for them analogous to mercy killing as per modern usage. In the prabhAvarakshAdhikAram of SrImad RahasyatrayasAram, Svami Desikan describes the prabhavam of Lord Narayana in the verse "shilAdhe strItva…..tribhuvana paritrANamiti cha". Specifically, this verse is devoted to the potency of sharaNAgati, the act of unconditional, total surrender to the feet of Lord Narayana. The potency of the feet of Lord Narayana is described here. First, the feet transformed a stone into a beautiful woman (Ahalya shapa vimochanam during the incarnation as Lord Rama). Similarly, contact with Lord Krishna's feet transformed a burnt lump of flesh into a handsome king (Parikshit). These acts are astonishingly extraordinary. During the Narasimha avataram, the Lord's eyes struck terror in the heart of HiraNyakashipu and were verily in the form of a raging fire. However, the same eyes reflected a cool and compassionate glance towards the parama Bhagavata, Prahlada. This is a case of polar opposites (heat and coolness) existing simultaneously in the same place. Even more astonishing is the fact that the hands of Lord Rama transformed a blade of grass into the potent BrahmAstra. Furthermore, even the killing of enemies became an act of anugraham (blessing) for them. The reference here is to the gatekeepers Jaya and Vijaya, who on account of the curse of the Sanatkumaras had to take birth as enemies of Lord Narayana three times and meet their end in each birth at the hands of the Lord. Thus, HiraNyakashipu, HiraNyaksha, Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Shishupala and Dantavakra, who were the forms taken by Jaya and Vijaya as enemies of the Lord and met their end during His avatarams, were in fact



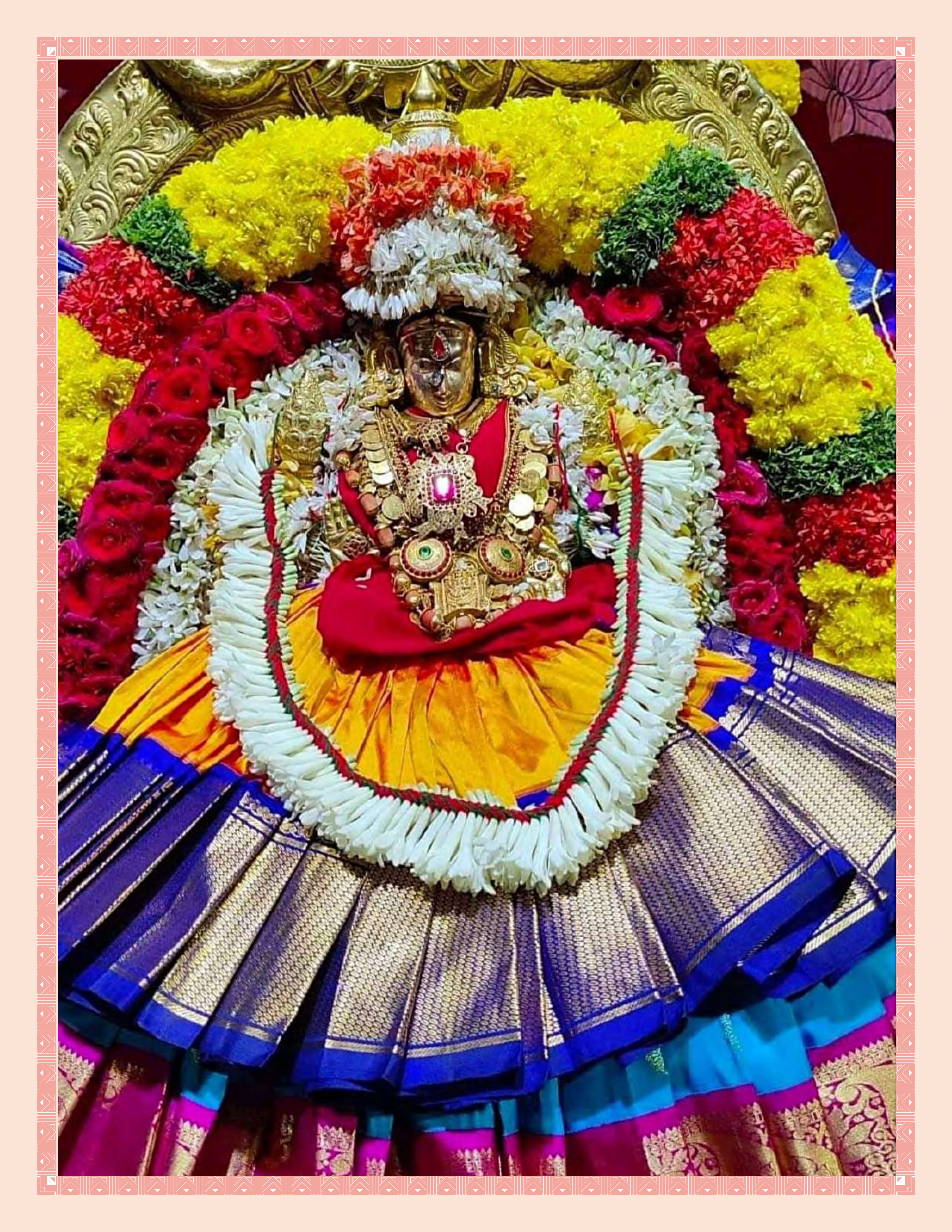
redeemed. Thus, even their killing by the Lord was an act of blessing for them. Not only that, the Padukas of Lord Narayana, protect the entire universe (the three worlds) along with its residents. The salutation "nihatereva hitatA" becomes relevant in the context of this Daya Satakam verse, a portion of which is examined in anvaya kramam (prose order). Specifically, "nihata rakShitAnAM hitam hR^idaye nidhAya" is the tribute of interest. This tribute means that keeping in His heart the well-being and protection of the subject, Lord Narayana engages in the sport of killing him. How killing, which is inherently cruel, becomes well-being for the punished needs to be accounted for. Here it must be observed that what may be seemingly cruel according to loka drishti (worldly perception) is actually an act of compassion as per the drishti (perception) of Lord Narayana. For example, the exiling of Rama shortly upon the announcement that He would be coronated as the crown prince of Ayodhya, was an act of extreme cruelty undertaken by Kaikayi. However, this is later glorified by sage Bharadvaja as an extremely great act which will bring about well-being for the universe. Lord Rama at this time had gone to the forest, Dasharatha breathed his last shortly after Lord Rama's departure from Ayodhya. Bharata upon returning from his maternal uncle's house and beholding the chaos in Ayodhya due to Lord Rama's exile and king Dasharatha's demise resolved to go to the forest with the singular purpose of bringing Lord Rama back to Ayodhya to have Him coronated. Thus, accompanied by a large retinue including the ministers and courtiers, army, as well as the three queens of Dasharatha, Bharata set out to the forest. Upon arriving at the Ashramam of Bharadvaja, he was welcomed warmly by the sage, who enquired whether Bharata was ruling Ayodhya well. Bharata was greatly saddened to hear these words of Bharadvaja and conveyed his unhappiness at the turn of events. Bharata expressed his utter lack of desire for the kingdom and the accompanying paraphernalia and more importantly his sadness at Rama's exile on account of Kaikeyi's actions. Bharadvaja remarked "I am well aware of your noble intention. However, I wanted the entire world to know this through your own words and hence my enquiry." Bharadvaja insisted that the entire retinue must necessarily partake in the feast at his Ashramam and only then proceed. Although Bharata wanted to reach Rama as soon as possible, he could not disregard sage Bharadvaja's command. Therefore, Bharata reluctantly accepted his offer. After the feast was served, and everyone was sumptuously fed, Bharata by way of introduction first points to Kausalya, the mother of Rama, who is deeply engrossed in thought of the well-being of Rama. He then introduces Sumatra, the mother of Lakshmana and Shatrughna, as an extremely great Bhagyavati who gave birth to Lakshmana, that is steeped in kaimkaryam for Lord Rama. Bharata then



points to Kaikeyi and remarks that she is the cause of all the disaster and chaos prevailing in the Raghu dynasty resulting from Lord Rama's exile and the demise of Dasharatha. Bharata mentions that she is his bhAgya-hIna (unfortunate) mother. Upon hearing Bharata's words, sage Bharadvaja remarked "rAma pravrAjanam hyetat sukhodarkam bhaviShyati" reflective of the fact that Kaikeyi is unfit to be belittled in the manner of Bharata's speech. He continues "That Kaikeyi has performed a great act by requesting Lord Rama's exile to the forest, which will bring about tremendous good for the entire universe." It may be asked here that would the welfare of all not be ensured if Rama had been coronated as the crown prince of Ayodhya. Bharadvaja emphatically declares "Absolutely not. As a consequence of Lord Rama's exile, the Maharishis in the forest can peacefully continue their penance in an uninterrupted manner. This will bring about great auspiciousness for the entire universe. Therefore, do not utter harsh words to belittle Kaikeyi." In a like manner, even though it may appear that the act of Parashurama in annihilating twenty-one generations of Kshatriyas was seemingly replete with ruthless cruelty, it in fact ended in the well-being for the Kshatriyas. The reason for Parashurama undertaking this task was due to the fact that Kartaviryarjuna was responsible for the death of his father, Jamadagni. It must be understood that the task of the Kshatriya king is to protect those sages engaged in penance, ensure their well-being, and enable uninterrupted continuation of their penance. Instead, undertaking the killing of those engaged in penance is a violation of the kshatriya's prescribed duty and downright a sinful act. This definitely called for punishment. Thus, the killing of Kartaviryarjuna by Parashurama was justified. So too was the act of annihilating twenty-one generations of Kshatriyas. Therefore, what may seem cruel from a worldly perspective is in fact intended for well-being from the standpoint of Lord Narayana and vice versa. Thus, what constitutes hitam and otherwise from our perspective is not important. It is from the view-point of Lord Narayana that what is hitam becomes critical. For example, even the worst of beings would not wish to die. Thus, living becomes important for all beings of the world and thus they desire long life. Furthermore, all of them desire to be youthful and dread old age. In addition, they desire to be well educated. One unit of manushyAnandam is described in the Upanishad tribute "yuvAsyAt sAdhu yuvAdhyAyakaH AshiShTho dR^iDiShTo baliShThaH tasyeyam pR^ithivi sarvAvittasya pUrNAsyAt sayeko mAnuSha AnandaH". Namely all human beings desire to be youthful. Moreover, they desire to be well educated so that they can offer instruction (veda adhyayanam) to others and be blessed with long life. In addition, they desire to be endowed with good health, firmness of mind, freedom


samasta jananIm vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM
shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm

from bodily afflictions and blessed with abundant wealth. The entire earth with all its belongings needs to be subservient to such a person. This constitutes one unit of manushya Ananda. Thus, the message from this Upanishad instruction is that one needs to be blessed with long life, good health, and abundant wealth. This constitutes hitam from a worldly perspective. However, these things in excess can have the opposite impact of hitam in that they can become a detriment. How so? For example, due to Bhagavad anugraham if one is blessed with a long life but one's near and dear ones are not similarly fortunate, one's existence for a long period of time bereft of the company of near and dear ones verily becomes a torture. Thus, the desire for a long life in this instance becomes a sour experience. Next, let us consider the case of one blessed with good health. If the able-bodied individual, blessed with good health, is steeped in indulgence for sensual gratification, this becomes completely counterproductive. They would be putting their sense organs to use in a manner that was never intended (It may be recalled that Daya Devi greatly moved by the plight of sentient beings existing in an inert state, reasons that if afforded another birth endowed with sense organs they may put it for use in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam). Thus, in this instance bestowing good health becomes futile. Increase in one's wealth only causes an increase in the array of one's adversaries. Increase in wealth does not result in an increase in one's friends. Instead, everyone associates with the wealthy individual to get a share of the wealth. Even among them discontent is rife due to the fact that they may compare themselves with one another and remark that one of them received a greater share of the wealth than the other. Thus, an increase in wealth does not necessarily translate into increase in one's happiness. Hence, what is considered desirable from a worldly perspective yields precisely the opposite consequences. Likewise, what is considered cruel from a worldly perspective can in fact become an act that ensures one's well-being. This fact is illustrated in the Parashurama avataram. Thus, Svami Desikan declares in this Daya Satakam verse that the act carried out in the Parashurama avataram was undertaken by the kind-hearted Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root in the Venkatam hill. Even though the act may seem like a ruthless annihilation, it in fact ensured the well-being of the Kshatriya kings. "sharaNAgata paritrANa satatantu dIkShitaH" is a tribute that describes the disposition of Lord Narayana towards sharaNAgatas, namely He has sworn to protect those who have surrendered to him. This is a yaj~nam performed by Lord Narayana. It must also be remembered that a yaj~nam cannot be performed alone. One must necessarily be accompanied by one's spouse for this act in keeping with the tribute "patnitvam yaj~na samyoge". Thus, people without their wives do not have the authority to



perform a sacrifice. Thus, the act of protecting all beings of the universe is a yaj~am carried out by Lord Narayana. He is accompanied by His Patni, Mahalakshmi Thayar, in this act. Thus, the act of protection of the universe is carried out jointly by Lord Narayana and His consort, Mahalakshmi. In the context of the Parashurama avataram, the act of protecting the universe was jointly undertaken by Lord Narayana, and His consort, Mahalakshmi/Daya Devi. Since this was a yaj~na jointly undertaken by the Divine Couple, the Kshatriyas, who were annihilated, were actually the sacrificial animals and attained residence in svarga loka. The blood from their killing was in fact in the form of a Vermillon offering that was affectionately applied by Parashurama to Daya Devi is the position of Svami Desikan's tribute "kShitIshvara pashu kSharatkShataja ku~Nkuma sthAsakaiH" in this Daya Satakam verse. This may seem like a sadistic act on the part of Lord Narayana. However, it is not so, as elaborately clarified earlier. The act of application of the Vermillon, so to speak an offering of saffron decoration, on Daya Devi is merely a confirmation by Lord Narayana, that He has completed the act that Daya Devi instigated in the first place to ensure the well-being of the universe. Lord Narayana is described in the Purusha Suktam tribute "ajAyamAno bahudA vijAyate" (One who has no birth takes many births). The numerous births of Lord Narayana come about exclusively on account of His desire to protect those who have surrendered to Him. This is further glorified in the Rg Vedam tribute (3.8.4)"sa u shreyAn bhavati jAyamAnaH" It is important to note that there is a difference in the reason for our births compared to the numerous avatarams taken by Lord Narayana. Our birth is a result of karma. However, the avatarams of Lord Narayana come about due to His sankalpam. Each time the Lord incarnates, it only results in an increase in His glory as described by the tribute "sa u shreyAn bhavati jAyamAnaH" No fault accrues to the Lord as a result of His incarnations. However, for us each birth only results in an accumulation of additional karma keeping us forever chained to the cycle of births and deaths reflected in the tribute "punarapi jananam punarapi maraNam". In keeping with this fact, the avataram of Parashurama enhanced the glory of Lord Narayana in that even for Kshatriyas given to arrogance born out of power He granted an elevated state through their annihilation. This avataram came about at the instigation of Daya Devi. Thus, the avataram was to ensure the well-being of the universe as expounded upon by Svami Desikan in this verse. We conclude our exposition of this verse on this note."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri.U.Ve. Shaili Patracharier Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You had once induced Lord Srinivasa to enter the wrath-filled Brahmin, Parashurama, with an axe as his characteristic weapon. He was a great



Tapasvi, albeit bent on annihilating the kshatriya clan for twenty-one generations, to be precise, for avenging the brutal killing of his father, Jamadagni. That Parashurama killed the warrior clan as a punishment gave scope for their souls to enjoy svarga lokam. Both Manu smriti and the Bhagavad-gita attest to this form of benefit for a kshatriya killed in battle.

Picturesquely depicting the assassination of kings as performing a yaj~na in which the oblation material was the ruler's blood, one imagines that the blood drops scattered on You, Oh Daya Devi! could well be the Lord Srinivasa's sportive requital to You through a saffron unguent! We are correctly sensitized to the situation that the Lord in the Parashurama incarnation deeply cherished in his heart, the well-being of the slain. Their sinfulness from Brahma hatya had to be removed. They have to be granted the heavens. What a delightful duty of doing good even when engaging in the apparently gruesome act of killing!

1. Parashurama avataram is of course difficult to conceptualize. Svami Desikan cleverly weaves a picture of Daya Devi playing Her role and even the killing of royalty is depicted as a yaj~na. We may recall that anger, delusion etc were portrayed as handmaids to Daya Devi. Killing demons was earlier likened to weed-removal to safeguard food-plants. Here, the killing of kings became a necessity to save their souls.

2. Killing kings is portrayed as a yaj~na. Indeed, the Puranic account is that Parashurama performed oblations in fire with the blood of the slain kings. This fact may be somewhat hard to reconcile."



Slokam 87

कृपे कृत जगद्धिते कृपण जन्तु चिन्तामणे
रमा सहचरं तदा रघु धुरीणयन्त्या त्वया।
व्यभज्यत सरित्पतिः सकृदवेक्षणात् तत्क्षणात्
प्रकृष्ट बहु पातक प्रशम हेतुना सेतुना॥ ८७॥

kR^ipe kR^ita jagaddhite kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe
ramA sahacaraM tadA raghu dhurINayantyA tvayA|
vyabhajyata saritpatiH sakR^idavekShaNAt tatkShaNAt
prakR^iShTa bahu pAtaka prashama hetunA setunA||87



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

“This verse is “kR^ipe kR^ita jagaddhite kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe ramA sahacaraM tadA raghu dhurINayantyA tvayA vyabhajyata saritpatiH sakR^idavekShaNAt tatkShaNAt prakR^iShTa bahu pAtaka prashama hetunA setunA”. The previous verse highlighted the glory of Parashurama avataram. Even though the actions in the Parashurama avataram were gruesome and cruel from a worldly perspective, it was established therein that the purpose of the incarnation was to ensure the well-being of those slain. Now, Svami Desikan highlights the glory of the Rama avataram in this verse. It may be remembered that Valmiki Bhagavan has documented this in 24000 verses of the Valmiki Ramayanam. Ramayanam is no ordinary grantham. Instead, it is the Vedam itself transformed into a live act (itihasa) as evidenced by the tribute “vedaH prAcetasA dAsIt sAkshAt rAmAyaNAtmana” reflecting the fact that the Vedam transformed itself into the RamayaNam through the words of Valmiki Bhagavan. Therefore, Ramayanam is no different from the Vedam. What is Vedam? Sri Kuresha describes this in his tribute “niHshvAsitaM vedaH”. That is the Vedam functions as the life breath for Lord Narayana. The Ramayanam hails Lord Rama, who is none other than the supreme being (parama purusha) extolled by the Vedam. The glory of Lord Rama is matchless and cannot be captured by mere words. Even if the entire Daya Satakam consisting of 108 verses is devoted to the glorification of Lord Rama, it would be insufficient. However, due to the constraint of one verse per avataram, Svami Desikan is forced



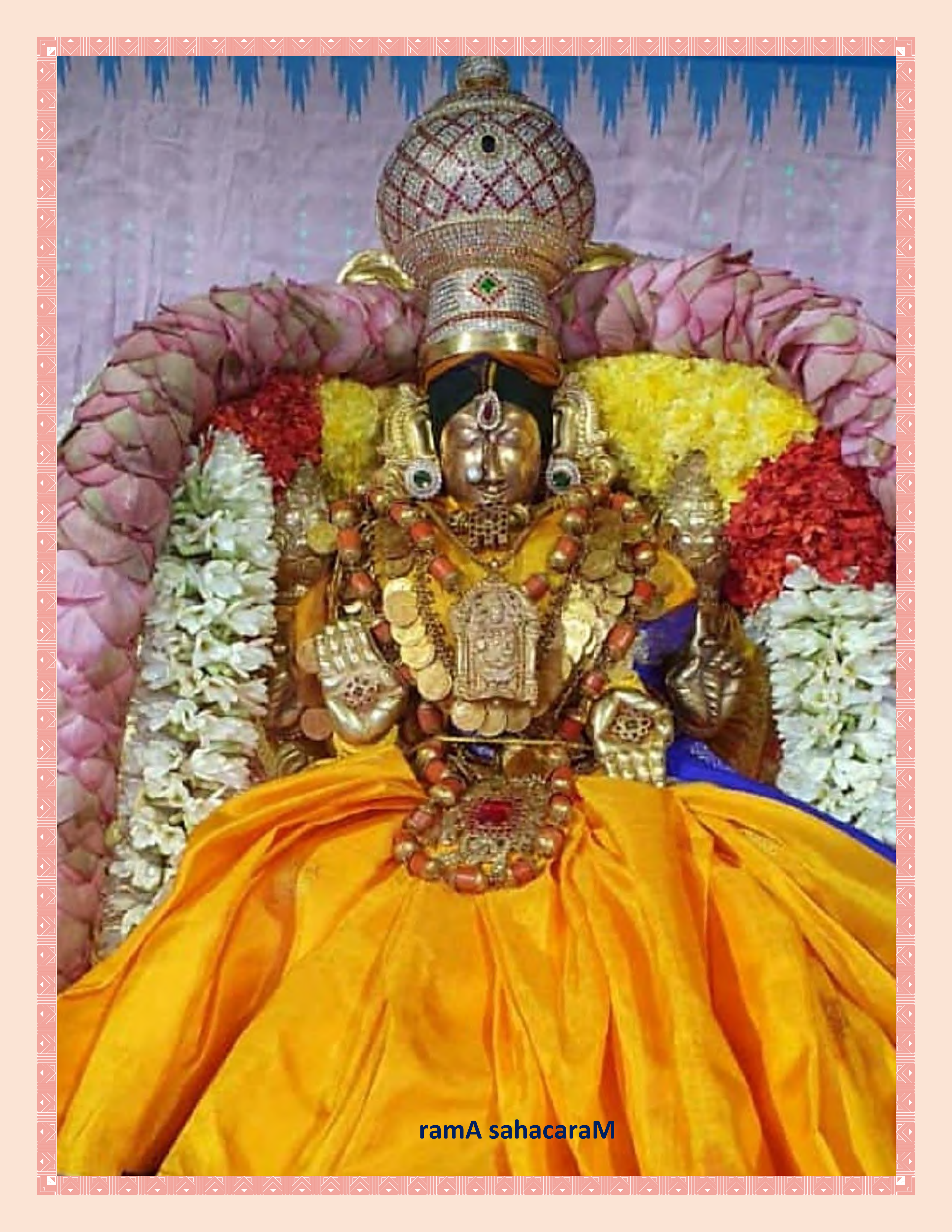
to pick a highlight from the Ramayanam to document in this verse. There is a significant connection to be made between the Rama avataram and Daya Devi. What is this? In order to understand this connection, it is helpful to first recall the tribute to Daya Devi from verse 6 of the Daya Satakam wherein Svami Desikan declares "samasta jananIm vande caitanyastanyadAyinIm shreyasIM shrInivAsasya karuNAmiva rUpiNIm" highlighting the fact that if a concrete form is assigned to the Daya guNam, it would undoubtedly be Mahalakshmi Thayar. If a male form is to be assigned to the Daya guNam it has to be Lord Rama. In the DashAvatAra stotram, Svami Desikan describes the Rama avataram as "karuNA kAkutstha" to denote that Lord Rama was the epitome of compassion (KaruNa/Daya). In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan conveys a unique insight about the Rama avataram. "rAmoramayati prajAnAM abhavat kathAH" is the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute that becomes relevant here. Upon the coronation of Lord Rama, the only word heard in Ayodhya and for that matter in the universe was "Rama". If people beheld a beautiful object they would immediately remark that "Rama is very fond of this. It would be great if Rama can see this." The entire universe was reverberating with the sound of Rama from dawn to dusk. What would be the reason for this? It is undoubtedly the unique connection that each one of them enjoyed with Rama, which made them glorify Him exclusively. What would be reason for this connection? It is entirely His blemishless conduct and good acts. This is documented in the SrImad Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "vyasaneShu manuShyANaM bhR^ishaM bhavati duHkhitaH utsaveShu ca sarveShu piteva parituShyati". In the reign of Lord Rama, none of His subjects encountered difficulty of any kind. If someone had an issue, Lord Rama took it upon Himself to resolve this instantly as if it was His personal travail. Similarly, if one of His subjects experienced joy due to a good occurrence, Lord Rama would take delight in the manner of a father rejoicing in the success of his child. For example, if one graduates from a prestigious institution, the happiest persons upon conclusion of the convocation ceremony are the parents of the individual. Due to this fact, Lord Rama was hailed as "rAmoramayati prajAnAM abhavat kathAH". This disposition of Lord Rama was not restricted to the residents of Ayodhya or mere humans. This prevailed even in the case of Rakshasas. This is evidenced in the SrImad Ramayana Charma slokam "sakR^ideva prapannAya tavAsmIti ca yAcate abhayaM sarvabhUtebhyo dadAmyetat vrataM mama". (It is sufficient to perform sharaNAgati to the feet of Lord Rama once with the declaration "I am subservient to You." Lord Rama grants all of them freedom from fear. This is His sworn position.) This is all the more important since it comes in the context of sharaNAgati



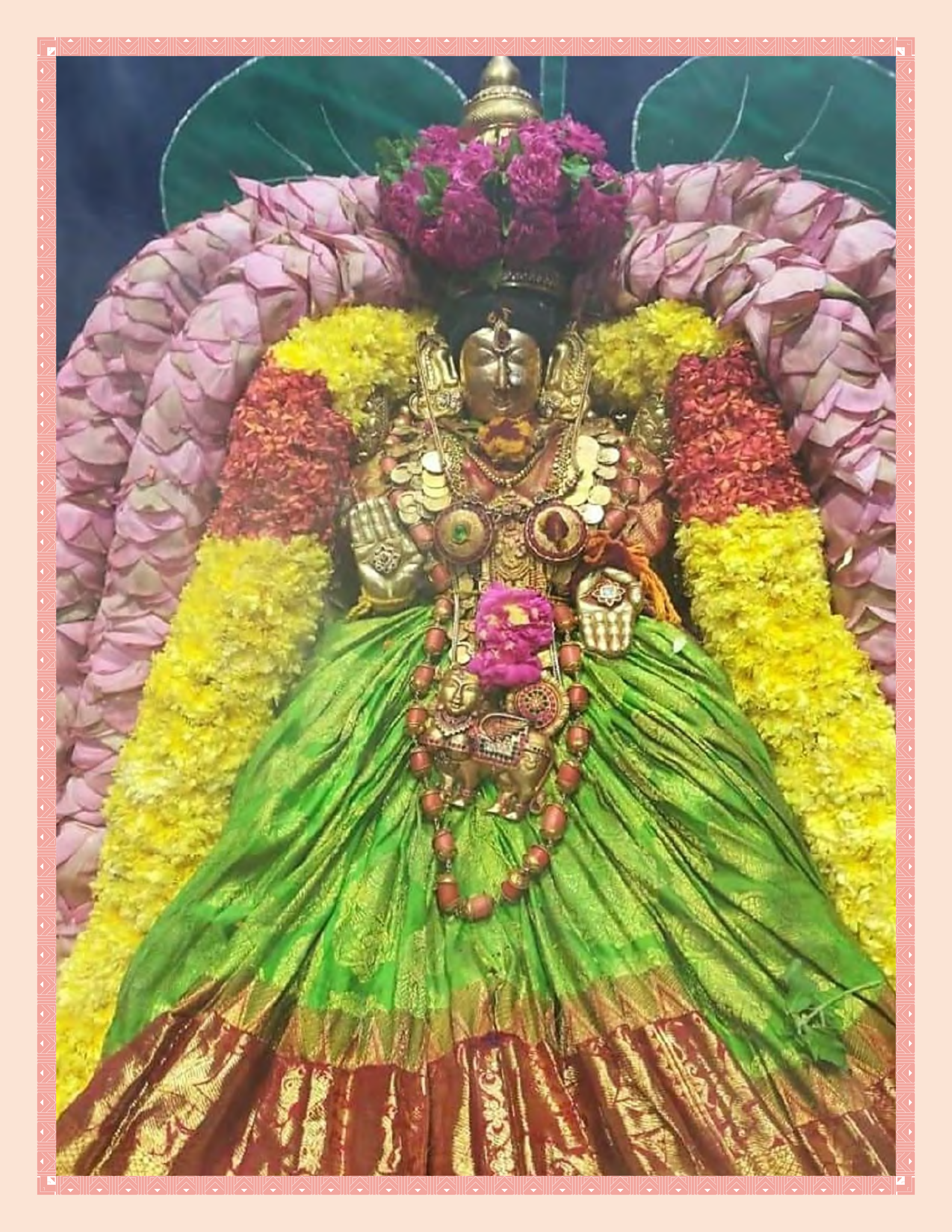
of Vibhishana who belonged to the Rakshasa clan and furthermore was the brother of the enemy, Ravana. It must be remembered that commoners like Sugriva, a mere monkey, and the Rakshasa, Vibhishana, were graced. They had no special qualifications or had not undertaken any acts of Tapas. They submitted the appeal for protection in the manner outlined in the Ramayana Charma slokam and became privy to the "abhayam" from Lord Rama. The lack of any qualification on the part of the supplicant is the distinctive feature of Lord Rama dispensing His anugraham to sharaNAgatas. This is denoted as the "akincanyaika dhanar". It is important to note that those who perform sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana are akincanas, in that they are totally lacking in knowledge and strength to adopt the nuances of Karma Yogam, J~nAna yogam, and Bhakti yogam for protecting themselves. Therefore, they seek the feet of Lord Narayana as their sole refuge. In this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan glorifies Lord Rama of such a lofty stature and outlines the reason for Daya Devi causing Lord Srinivasa to take the incarnation of Rama. Every act of Daya Devi is uniquely fascinating. The sambodhanam in this verse is "kR^ipe!". Furthermore, the act of Daya Devi is glorified through the tribute "kR^ita jagaddhite kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe" (Daya Devi is hailed in this tribute as one who ensures the well-being of the entire universe. She serves as the Chintamani gem that grants seekers all they wish for.) The reason for this glorification of Daya Devi is due to the fact that She dispenses Her grace to those who have sought refuge in Her as well to those who have not sought refuge in Her (denoting those who may belong to the adversarial camp). The inner meaning is that even for those who may be adversarial, Daya Devi only wishes to bestow Her anugraham. Since the avataram of Lord Rama came about on account of Daya Devi's initiation, Lord Rama acts as a replica of Daya Devi. Therefore, He is glorified as karuNA kAkutstha. Hence, the sambodhanams "kR^ipe" "kR^ita jagaddhite" and "kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe" for Daya Devi from this verse are equally applicable to Lord Rama. To understand this, it is helpful to examine the Yuddha kandam encounter between Lord Rama and Ravana. A fierce battle ensues between the two after which, Ravana is unable to continue the fight and swoons in his chariot. At that juncture, Ravana's charioteer steers the chariot away from Lord Rama. Upon recovering from his swoon, Ravana admonished his charioteer for the cowardly act of steering the chariot away from Lord Rama, which brought about the stigma of retreat from battle for Ravana. This is reflected in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "shatroH prakhyAtavIryasya ranjanIyasya vikramaiH" (Ravana berates his charioteer with great regret. "Rama, hailed as the great warrior, is doing battle with me. At that time you make me look like a mere mortal coward fleeing from the enemy.") The reason for this act on the


a~NgIkAribhiH AlokaiH

part of Ravana is Lord Rama's matchless valor. The implication is that Rama's valor is so great that it is even admired by His enemy, Ravana. During another encounter with Ravana, Lord Rama had him at His mercy and could have easily killed Ravana. However, Lord Rama addressed Ravana thus. "You have fought well today. Go back to Lanka. Get rest and come back refreshed for battle tomorrow." One may ask what is the reason for Lord Rama's disposition in this manner. He had His sworn enemy at His mercy but yet exuded compassion. It should also be observed that this was not an ordinary battle over trivial items such as a kingdom or the like. Instead it was about the grave apacharam that Ravana committed towards Sita Devi, who is glorified in the Ramayanam tribute "ananyA rAghaveNAhaM bhAskareNa prabhA yathA" (I belong to none other than Lord Rama and cannot be separated from Him just like the radiance cannot be separated from the Sun.) Andal describes Ravana in the Tiruppavai Pasuram through the line "pollaa arakkanai kiLLikaLaintAnai kIrtimai pADippOi" The usage pollaa arakkan is significant in that Andal characterizes Ravana as the evil Rakshasa due to his maha aparadham of separating Thayar from Perumal. Even for Ravana, who exhibited a despicable nature, Lord Rama demonstrated kindness through His words "You have fought well today. Go back to Lanka and return refreshed tomorrow." The reason for this act on the part of Lord Rama was to afford Ravana another chance at reforming himself. In the event, Ravana realizes his mistake, returns Sita Devi to Lord Rama, and performs sharaNAgati to Lord Rama's feet there is another opportunity for redemption. It is solely with this intention that Lord Rama's disposition towards Ravana was that of extreme compassion. Therefore, it can be inferred from this act of Lord Rama, that His objective is to ensure the well-being of all sentients and insentients in the universe - even those who have committed the most heinous crimes. This is a shared characteristic with Daya Devi due to the fact that Daya Devi Herself ensured Lord Narayana's incarnation as Rama. The Chintamani gem is unique in that it grants the possessor all they seek and more. In a like manner, Daya Devi grants those who have sought refuge in Her everything they ask for and then some. This trait is not only for those that have the Chintamani in their possession but also for their progeny and successive generations. Similarly, Daya Devi showers Her grace not only on those who have sought refuge in Her/Lord Srinivasa, but also for their progeny and subsequent generations. Therefore, the usage "kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe" from this Daya Satakam verse is intended to convey the message that Daya Devi confers all manner of well-being to those who have sought refuge in Her/Lord Srinivasa. SvAmi NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi declares "kecavan tamar kIzh mEl emar yEzh yezhu piRappum" (It is sufficient to vouch that I am


ramA sahacaraM

subservient to Keshava and have performed sharaNAgati to Him. This will ensure that seven generations of ancestors prior to the individual as well as seven generations that follow in the line of the individual will be redeemed, resulting in the protection for fifteen generations.) This is the inner meaning of the tribute "kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe". The import of this Daya Satakam tribute is that Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to take the incarnation of Rama for the sole purpose of ensuring the well-being of all sentients and insentients in the universe. This raises the question "What is the parama prayojanam of the Rama avataram?" For example, it was documented in the context of the Narasimha avataram that the parama prayojanam was "danujaDimba dattastanA". (Rather than the destruction of HiraNyakashipu, it was the protection of Prahlada that was the primary objective of the Narasimha avataram. The implication here is that Lord Narasimha was deeply concerned about upholding the words of His Bhagavata, Prahlada. In order to ensure the truthfulness of Prahlada's words that the Lord is resident in the pillar and not knowing which pillar HiraNyan would hit, Bhagavan Narasimha took root in all the pillars in the entire universe as documented in Svami Desikan's VaradarAja PancAshat tribute "trailokyametadakhilaM narasimha garbham". The import of this tribute is that Bhagavan Narasimha emerged from the pillar struck by HiraNyan but remains in all pillars of the universe.) It is thus established that the sole purpose of the Narasimha avataram was the protection of those who have sought refuge in Him. Likewise, the reason for the Trivikrama avataram was to protect all sentient and insentient beings of the universe through the touch of His feet. When examined in this light a natural question that arises is "what is the reason for the Rama avataram?" This can be understood by examining the Valmiki Ramayanam, which is regarded as the sharaNAgati sastram. The epic contains seven khandams (major sections). Each khandam is replete with instances of sharaNAgati. At the outset of the Ramayanam, there is the sharaNAgati by the Devas, who approached Lord Narayana with the submission that they were tormented no end by Ravana possessing extreme strength and sought relief from Ravana's tyranny. Lord Narayana answers their request in the affirmative. He further declares that Dasharatha Chakravarti will undertake the performance of the putra kAmeShTi yaj~nam as a result of which, Lord Narayana will incarnate as one of the sons of Dasharatha and relieve the Devas from Ravana's tyranny. Upon examining this premise it can be concluded that Lord Narayana took the incarnation of Rama in order to fulfill the sharaNAgati of the Devas and ensure the destruction of Rakshasas like Khara, DhUshaNa, RavaNa and the like. Next, when examining the AraNya khandam, in the context of Bharata's introduction of Kaikayi to sage



Bharadvaja, wherein he mentioned to the sage that she is his bhAgya-hina (unfortunate) mother, who is the cause for all the chaos and troubles inflicted upon the Raghu dynasty. Upon hearing Bharata's words, sage Bharadvaja remarked "rAma pravrAjanaM hyetat sukhodarkaM bhaviShyati" reflective of the fact that Kaikayi is unfit to be belittled in the manner of Bharata's speech. He continues "that Kaikayi has performed a great act by requesting Lord Rama's exile to the forest, which will bring about tremendous good for the entire universe." This is further elaborated upon in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "tam dR^iShTvA shatruhantAraM maharShINAM sukhAvahaM babhUva hR^iShTA vaidehI bhartAraM pariShvaje". The import of this tribute is that Lord Rama returned victorious after annihilating fourteen thousand rakshasas single-handedly. The Maharishis in the forest were exuberant in hailing the matchless valor of Lord Rama. Upon beholding Him, Sita Devi affectionately embraced Him. Thus, it may be inferred from this tribute that the incarnation of Lord Rama was to fructify the sharaNAgati of the Maharishis in the forest, who sought His help for uninterrupted continuation of their penance, which was disrupted due to harassment by the rakshasas inhabiting the daNDaka forest. However, Svami Desikan lends a unique perspective to the reason for the Rama Avataram by noting that it is not for the destruction of the Rakshasas, and protecting the Devas/Maharishis. Instead, the reason is documented in the tribute "ramA sahacaraM kShitau" of this Daya Satakam verse. The usage "ramA sahacaraM" denotes Lord Narayana, who is forever associated with Mahalakshmi, is glorified as one who is acting at the behest of His consort, Sri. It must be borne in mind that Daya Devi is the cause for both Lord Narayana and Thayar to incarnate together in this manner. Testimony in support of this fact can be seen from the ViShNu PurANam salutation "rAghavatve(a)bhavatsItA rukmiNI kR^iShNa janmani anyeShu cAvatAreShu viShNornityAnapAyinI". The import of this glorification is that when Lord Narayana incarnates as Rama, Mahalakshmi too accompanies Him through the incarnation as Sita Devi to provide a fitting match. So too is the case in the Krishna avataram, where Mahalakshmi accompanies Him as Rukmini. In a like manner, Mahalakshmi is never separated from Lord Narayana in all His incarnations. Even the case of the Trivikrama avataram, where Lord Narayana assumed the form of a Brahmachari, Mahalakshmi accompanied Him through Her residence in His Vakshasthalam (chest region). Lest this arouse suspicion whether, the Lord is truly a Brahmachari, Vamana masked the presence of Thayar from view through the covering of the kR^iShnAjInam (deer skin). On the other hand, in the Rama avataram, Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi (as Sita Devi), incarnated in full view of the entire



"kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe"

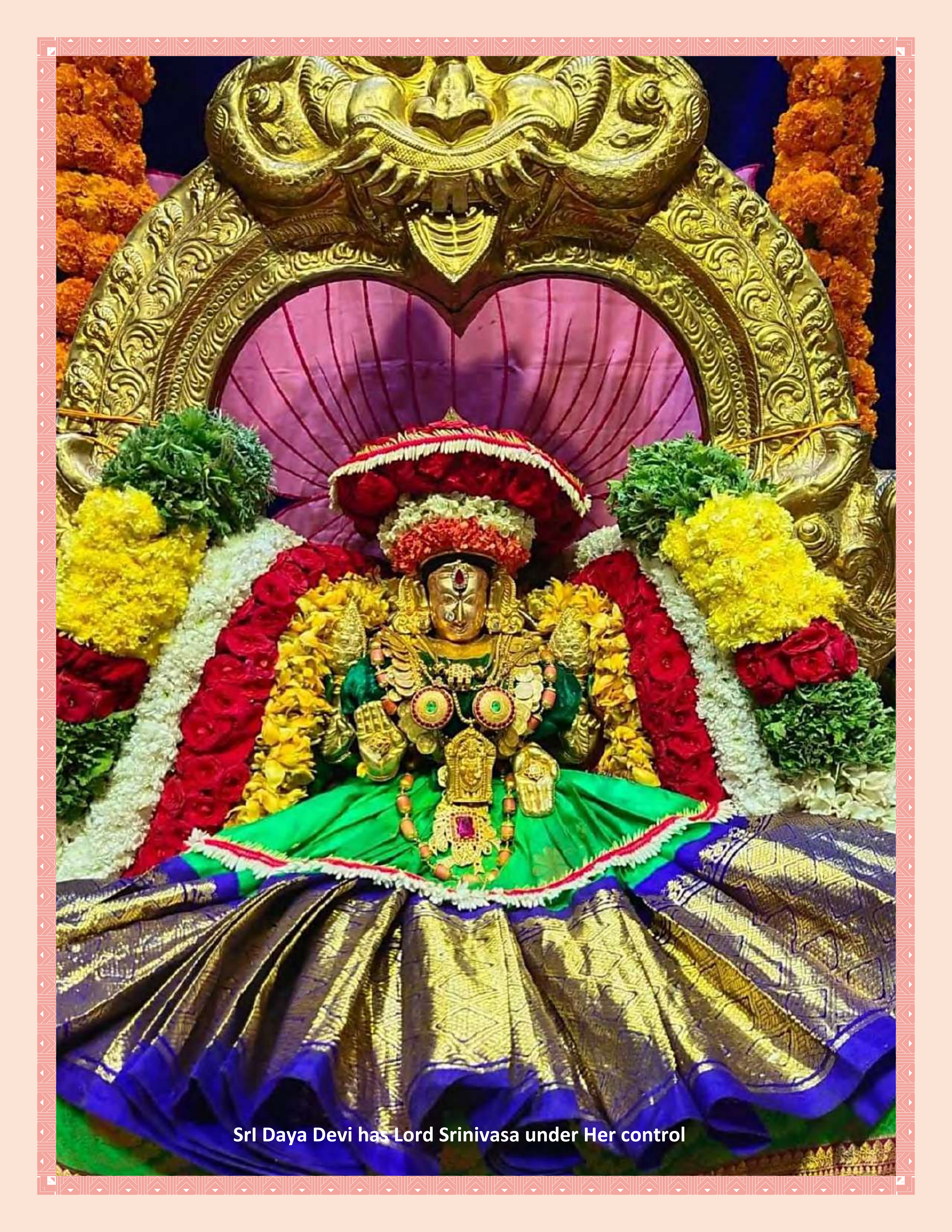
SrI Padmavati tAyAr in SrI Rama tirukkOlam

universe. This is the reason for the usage "ramA sahacAram". This also denotes the fact that Lord Rama is none other than Lord Srinivasa. Another reason for the usage "ramA sahacAram" is due to the fact that Lord Narayana always acts in conformance with the dictates of Mahalakshmi Thayar. When it comes to protecting those who have sought refuge, Thayar's compassion is overflowing and precedes that of Lord Narayana. Sri Kuresa salutes this aspect of Mahalakshmi Thayar in the SrI Stava salutation "yasyA vIkShya mukhaM tadi~NgitaparAdhIno vidhatte(a)khilaM krIDeyaM khalu nanyathA(a)sya rasadA syAdaikarasyAttayA" Every act of Lord Narayana is carried out with the tacit approval of Thayar. The Lord engages in the act of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe only upon receiving the approval from the facial looks of Thayar. Sri Parasara Bhattar goes a step further in describing this through the GuNaratna kosham tribute "a~NgIkAribhiH AlokaiH" attesting to the fact that Lord Narayana looks for Mahalakshmi Thayar's approving eye glances as a validation for all of His acts. It is in the manner of a puruShArtham for Lord Narayana that He seeks the eye glances of Thayar. Thus, the tribute "ramA sahacaraM tadA raghu dhurINayantyA tvayA" from this Daya Satakam verse attests to the fact that Lord Narayana undertakes the avataram of Rama along with Mahalakshmi to act in a manner that is entirely governed by Her dictates. Here too it must be noted that the reference to Rama is not direct. Instead, it is in the form of one who was the crown jewel of the Raghu dynasty. The reason for this usage is to highlight the greatness of the Raghu clan. The inner meaning is that successive kings in the Raghu dynasty were aware of the avatAra rahasyam of Lord Narayana. This is evidenced in SrImad Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "ko(a)nvasmin sAmpratam loke guNavAn kashca vIryavAn" (Who in the universe is replete with good qualities and endowed with matchless valor?) This tribute is in the form of a question from Valmiki Maharishi to Narada. Narada responds to the question by stating that "It is impossible to find the attributes you have outlined in a single person. However, there exists one Purusha, who has all these attributes. This is Lord Rama." Lord Rama is described by SvAmi NammAzhvar in the Tiruvaimozhi as "naRpAl ayottiyil vAzhum charAcharam muRRavum naRpalukkuittanan" (Lord Rama granted moksham to all sentient and insentient beings resident in Ayodhya). This Rama incarnated as the crown jewel of the Raghu clan. Lord Rama Himself acclaims the greatness of the Raghu dynasty during the VibhishaNa sharaNAgati. During this act, there ensued a spirited discussion between Lord Rama and all the Vanaras on whether Vibhishana can be accepted or not. It is significant to note that Lord Rama had declared prior to this discussion "dattaM mayAsyAbhayam purA" (Even when Vibhishana was airborne



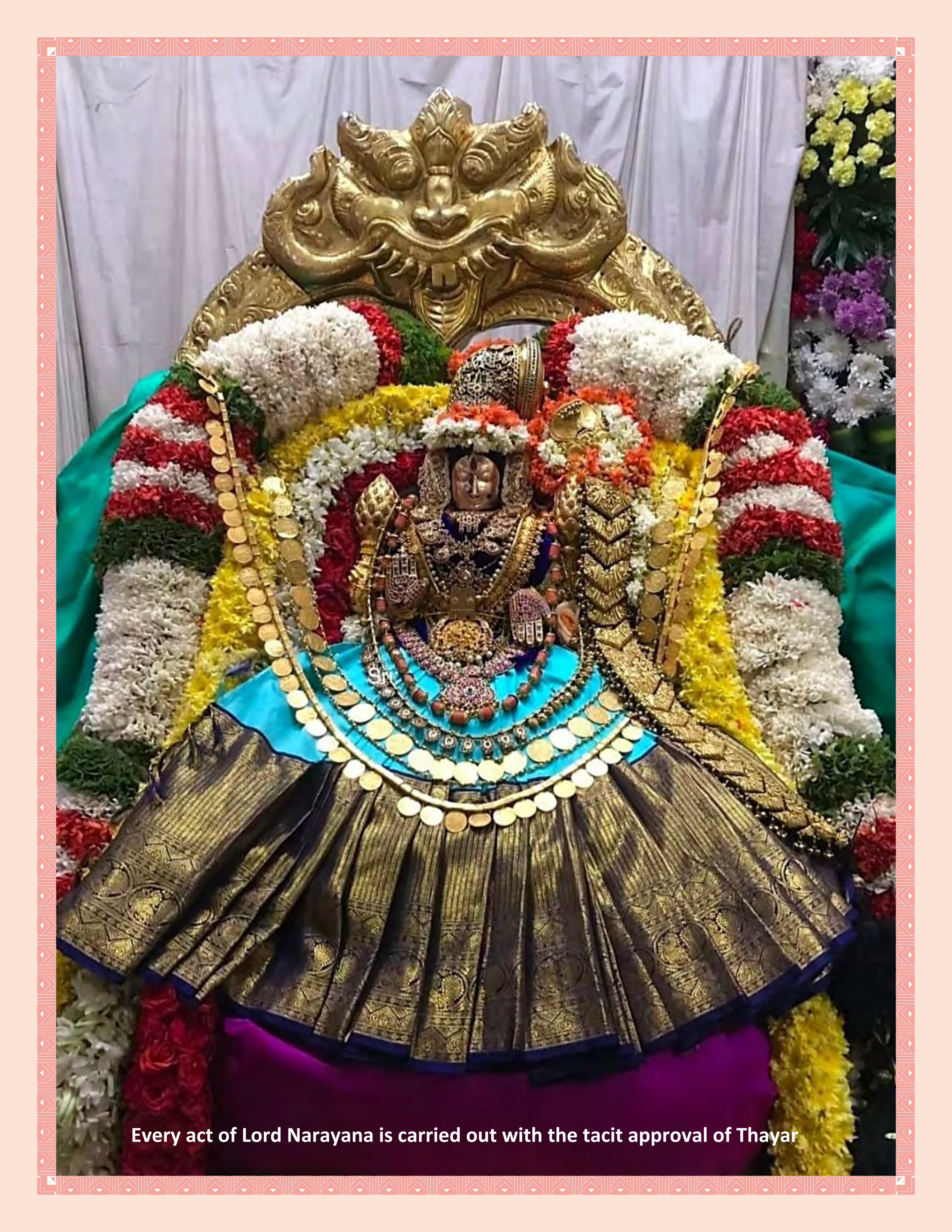
and submitted His appeal for sharaNAgati, Lord Rama had assured him of protection.) Why then is the discussion necessary in the first place? It was to ensure that any objections to accepting Vibhishana by the Vanara chiefs was voiced and resolved since Vibhishana would have a prominent role in the war subsequently. After all objections are aired and cleared, Lord Rama declares in the Ramayana charama slokam "sakR^ideva prapannAya tavAsmIti ca yAcate abhayaM sarvabhUtebhyo dadAmyetat vrataM mama" (It is My sworn position to offer protection to one who has performed sharaNAgati to Me. It does not matter if the individual is a sentient or insentient being, an animal, bird, rakshasa, friend, enemy, or the lowliest of beings.). This disposition of Lord Rama comes about on account of the Vedam (Taittriya Samhita 6-5-6-3) tribute "vadhyaM prapannaM na prati prayacChanti". (The meaning of this tribute is that even if one is deserving of the death penalty, he should not be punished if he performs sharaNAgati. Instead, he needs to be protected at any cost.) The task of protecting those who have sought refuge has been taken very seriously by kings in the Raghu dynasty. For example, Shibi Chakravarthi, one of the kings in this line, was prepared to give up his flesh in order to save a bird that had sought refuge in him. In a like manner, Lord Rama highlighted numerous acts by kings in the Raghu dynasty in terms of offering protection to those who had sought refuge. He then declares that if He declines to protect Vibhishana, not only is it a blemish on His part but it incurs a stigma for the entire Raghu clan. Therefore, He resolves to protect Vibhishana. Not only that Lord Rama declares that if Ravana himself performed sharaNAgati, He stands ready to offer protection. This is documented in the tribute "yadi vA rAvaNa svayaM". The message of protection for those who perform sharaNAgati is also reflected in Sita Devi's words of advice to Ravana in the tribute "mitramaupayikaM kartuM rAmaH sthAnaM parIpsatA tena maItrI bhavatu te yadi jIvitumicchasi". (Oh Ravana do not proceed on the path of ruin! You have abducted Me and brought Me here. Furthermore, you uttered despicable words towards Me. Even now it is not too late. Perform sharaNAgati to Lord Rama's feet. Since you are a king, it may be beneath you to submit yourself to someone else. Therefore, befriend Rama and restore Me to Him if you are interested in your well-being. Rama will definitely protect you). Thus, the task of protecting sharaNAgatas assumes paramount importance even with respect to Thayar. The kings of the Raghu dynasty have placed a premium on the task of protecting those who have sought refuge. Lord Rama takes it to the next level and is therefore regarded as the crown jewel in the Raghu dynasty. Thus, Lord Narayana incarnated in the Raghu clan as Rama. When Lord Rama, Sita Devi, and Lakshmana went to the forest, they were warmly

welcomed by the Maharishis at their Ashramams. The Maharishis accorded Him the welcome with honors meant for an emperor. Lord Rama Himself is at a loss as to whether to accept them or not and conveys His hesitation. However, the Maharishis state that as far as they are concerned, Lord Rama is the emperor of the entire universe and is therefore befitting for all the honors they offered. Pleased with their appeal Lord Rama accepted their welcome. The Maharishis then gave Lord Rama a tour of the Ashramam. Lord Rama was aghast to see a massive collection of bones in the woods of the Ashramam and enquired of the Maharishis the reason for such a large pile of bones. The Maharishis responded with the salutation "ehi pashya sharIrANi munInAM bhAvitAtmanAm" reflecting the fact that the bones were the remains of Maharishis engaged in penance, who were attacked, killed, and whose flesh was devoured by rakshasas like Khara, DhUshaNa, Trishiras, and RAvaNa. The bones were strewn all over the place without care by the Rakshasas after their gruesome act. This Daya Satakam verse has two variations in the tribute "ramA sahacaraM kShitau" and "ramA sahacaraM tadA". The usage "tadA" in the latter version denotes the moment that Lord Rama learnt about the plight of the Maharishis being harassed by the rakshasas. This is also reflected in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute "ardha sanjAtasasyeva vR^iShTiM prApya vasundharA". While growing crops, it is customary to plant seeds in anticipation of rain (usually in the months of Vaikasi and Ani) so that the crops begin their yield in the Thula mAsam. Sometimes, the months of Ani and Adi may be bereft of rainfall and instead a return to summertime heat may occur. In such an occurrence, the budding plants from the seeds tend to wilt and wither due to lack of water. Only the farmer that engages in the challenging task of growing crops especially dependent on timely arrival of rainfall can appreciate the travails involved. The state of the Maharishis and the Devas were similar to the withering crop due to lack of rainfall. At that time, Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Rama avataram. This is the import of the salutation "ramA sahacaraM tadA". The inner meaning of this tribute is that Daya Devi's instigation for Lord Srinivasa to take the incarnation of Lord Rama brought about great joy to the entire universe and ended a time of great suffering for them. This is a uniqueness of the Rama avataram brought out beautifully through this tribute by Svami Desikan. Sri Tirumangai Azhvar performs mangalasasanam for Lord Ranganatha (it may be remembered that the Utsava Murti of Lord Ranganatha is celebrated as Lord Rama) through a tribute to the Rama avataram in the Periya Tirumozhi pasuram "Ezhai Etalan kIzhmakan ennAtira~Ngi maRRavaRkinnaruL curantu mAzhai mAn maDa nOkki un tOzhi umpi empi enROzhintilai ukantu tOzhan nI enakkinkozhi enRa coRkaL

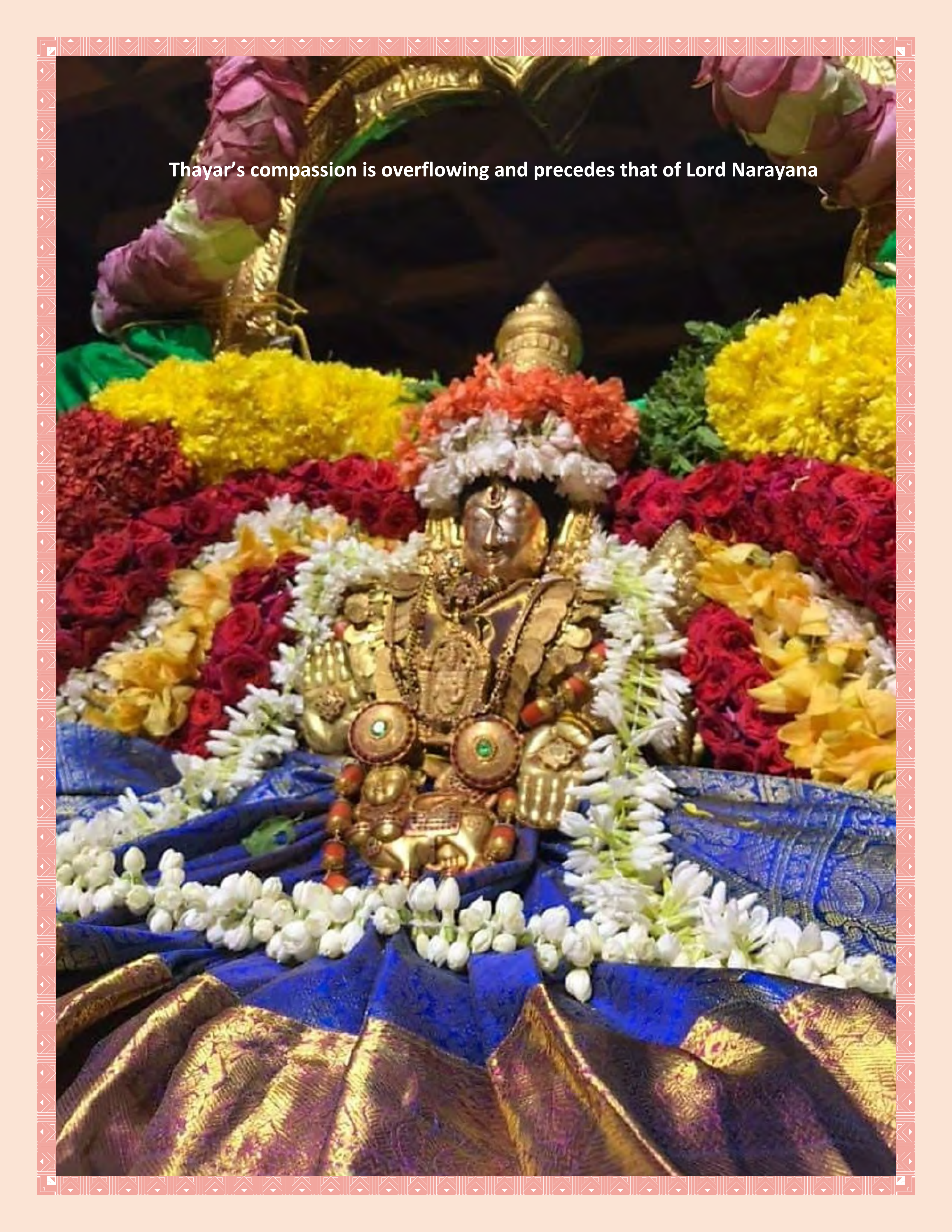


SrI Daya Devi has Lord Srinivasa under Her control

vantaDiyEn manattiruntiDa Azhi vaNNa nin aDiyiNai aDaintEn aNi pozhil tiruvarankattammAnE”. The Azhvar continues the glorification of Lord Rama by recounting His extraordinary acts in the next Pasuram through the tribute “vAta mA makan markkaDam vila~Nku maRROr cAtiyenRozhintilai ukantu kAtal Ataram kaDalinum peruka cei takavinukkillai kaimmARenRu kOtil vAimaiyinAyoDum uDanE uNpan nAn enRa oN poruL enakkum Atal vENDum enRaDiyinai aDaintEn aNi pozhil tiruvarankattammAnE” (Tirumangai Azhvar dwells on the acts of compassion of Lord Rama in befriending commoners like Guha of the hunter clan, Sugriva of the monkey clan and gracing birds like Jatayu). The Azhvar anubhavam is captured in the tribute of this Daya Satakam verse “raghu dhurINayantyA tvayA”. So far, a number of possible causes for the Rama avataram have been outlined. It may be asked if these are all or if there is something else remaining. Jatayu was a mere bird. However, Lord Rama performed the final rites for Jatayu, something that He could not do for His own father, Dasharatha. Not only that, but Lord Rama in this instance also offers a glimpse of Him being the Supreme Being. Even though He has assumed human form as documented in the Valmiki Ramayanam tribute “AtmAnaM mAnuShaM manye rAmaM dasharathAtmajam”, Lord Rama vouches that He grants Jatayu the benefit (of moksham) reserved for those performing great yaj~nas and upAsanas. Could this be a possible reason for His incarnation as Rama? Svami Desikan avers that while all of these are probable causes for the Lord’s avataram as Rama, the main reason for the avataram is documented in the tribute “saritpatiH setunA vyabhajyata” of this Daya Satakam verse. This refers to the fact that the ocean (Samudra raja) was split in two on account of the construction of the great bridge. This is the greatest benefit arising from the Rama avataram according to Svami Desikan. This is analogous to Svami Desikan’s tribute in Daya Satakam verse 85 for the Trivikrama avataram wherein he established that the main goal of the Trivikrama avataram was not to rescue the Devas, or grace Mahabali but to bless all sentient and insentient beings of the universe with the touch of His feet. The bridge or sethu is celebrated in the Srivaishnava tradition as tiruvaNai, namely an act (aNai) undertaken by Lord Rama in order to gain Sita (Tiru). The benefit of Sethu is captured in the tribute “setum dR^iShTvA samudrasya brahma hatyam vyapohati” (The mere sight of the bridge causes the destruction of grave sins like the killing of a Brahmin). There is the glorification of the Sethu by Lord Rama Himself, while returning in the Pushpaka Vimanam along with Sita. He seated Sita Devi in the window seat and pointed out the salient landmarks on the way. It may be noted that in the previous sargam, Lord Rama addressed Sita fairly harshly and remarked that “the construction of the bridge, the killing of Ravana


Every act of Lord Narayana is carried out with the tacit approval of Thayar

were all undertaken not to regain You but to safeguard the blemishless reputation of the Ikshvaku dynasty." Upon accepting Sita Devi after Her agni pravesham, Lord Rama most affectionately points out the salient places from the Pushpaka vimanam such as the place where the killing of Ravana occurred and the place where KumbhakarNa met his end. In this process, the Pushpaka Vimana arrived near the great bridge. The importance of the Sethu is captured in the Ramayanam tribute "etat dR^ishyate tIrthaM sAgarasya mahAtmanaH setubandha iti khyAtaM trailokyena ca pUjitam etat pavitraM paramaM mahApAtaka nAshanam" (Behold this bridge! This was constructed for Your sake. This is extremely pure in nature. This has the characteristic of destroying the greatest of sins.) Thus, the glory of the Sethu is highlighted by the words of Lord Rama Himself. Svami Desikan declares in this Daya Satakam verse, that it was solely for the construction of this Sethu that Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to take the incarnation of Lord Rama. The Vedam glorifies the Sethu in the tribute "dhyo samudro vithathA vachobhyo pashyavastete jaTareva pAdhAH tha yo pashyanto atiyantyanyamapashyantaH setunApi antyanyam" The Sethu is the point of union between the southern and northern ocean. This is inherently sacred. Svami Desikan uses the term "saritpatiH" in this Daya Satakam verse to denote the fact that the Samudra raja is the Lord of all the puNya nadis (sacred rivers - Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri). It also denotes the fact that the ocean is the union of all the sacred rivers. Thus, a bath in the ocean (Samudra snAnam) rids one of all their sins. Thus, the import of the salutation "vyabhajyata saritpatiH sakR^idavekShaNAt tatkShaNAt" is that Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Rama Avataram, solely for the purpose of the construction of the great causeway (bridge), which split the ocean into two parts, came to be known as "tiruvaNai" (created solely for the purpose of bringing back Thayar), and a snAnam (bath) in which ocean instantly rids one of all their sins. It may be asked "when should a snAnam be undertaken in the ocean?" Svami Desikan answers this through the salutation "avekShaNAt" to denote the fact that an actual snanam in not necessary. Mere sight of the bridge is sufficient. The Vedam tribute "samudrAya varuNAya sindhunAm pathaye namaha nadInAgam sarvAsAm putre" is uttered prior to performing snanam in the ocean. Thus, a mere submission of this mantram with folded hands while beholding the sethu is sufficient to destroy one's sins. Svami Desikan further qualifies this through the usage "sakR^id" in this Daya Satakam verse to denote that such an act needs to be performed only once. Hence, it is not required to behold the sethu repeatedly. Doing this once is sufficient. Srimad Bhagavatam declares the same in the salutation "nahyam mayanti ichani…." For


Thayar's compassion is overflowing and precedes that of Lord Narayana

example, one may perform snanam in sacred rivers like Ganga and Yamuna. This will no doubt destroy one's sins. However, this may not happen instantaneously and can happen only in time (kAlakramENa). Sometimes, it may require snanam in the rivers for many days for one's sins to be destroyed. One's sins can also be destroyed on account of prostrating before Lord Narayana in stone form or pancha loha form. This again happens in the course of time. However, when one prostrates before mahan sAdhus, one's sins are instantaneously destroyed. This is an instruction by Lord Krishna Himself to Uddhava. The import of this instruction is that when one prostrates before great Acharyas, one's sins are instantaneously destroyed. This is the reason for the Sri Vaishnavas placing a premium on saluting Acharyas and receiving their blessings. In a like manner beholding the sethu (bridge) but once is sufficient to instantaneously destroy one's sins. There may be limits to sins that one can be freed from by appropriate acts of expiation. However, beyond a point the consequences of grave sins can be quite overpowering rendering these acts futile. For example, destruction of the fetus (brUNa hatya) is the gravest of sins. All sins except brUNa hatya can be gotten rid of by the performance of the kUshmANDa homam. However, Sethu snanam unlike this, has no limits on what sins can be destroyed. In other words, the gravest of sins can be gotten rid of by performance of Sethu snanam. While undertaking Sethu snanam it is compulsory to perform a maha sankalpam. The sankalpam includes a lengthy list of sins that one has committed. For example, the list of sins includes rushing someone who is eating, asking a person to leave after partaking a meal, separating a calf from a cow for the purpose of milking a cow (all of us are guilty of this since we procure packaged milk in cartons and therefore may not explicitly see the act being carried out), among others. Performance of Sethu snanam rids one of all of these sins without exception as documented in the tribute "prakR^iShTa bahu pAtaka prashama hetunA setunA" of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, Daya Devi, who has Lord Srinivasa under Her control, caused Him to undertake the incarnation of Rama for the sole purpose of constructing the bridge, that separated the ocean into two parts, and by performing Sethu snanam instantaneously rids one of the gravest of sins. This is reflected in the statement "setum dR^iShTvA samudrasya brahma hatyam vyapohati". It is significant to note that the benefit of Sethu snanam is not restricted only to the time of the Rama avataram but is valid for all time including the present. Therefore, the main reason for the Rama avataram is due to the fact that the Sethu had to be constructed to rid errant jivans of the gravest sins. Great Acharyas have extolled three instances of significance in the Rama avataram. The first among them is Ahalya rakshaNam (redeeming Ahalya

from the curse of Gautama). This is significant due to the fact that without even being asked, Lord Rama considered it His duty to redeem Ahalya.



The second reason Sethu bandhanam - construction of the great causeway so that the benefit of Sethu snanam can be had for posterity by all errant jivans and not merely restricted to the time of the Rama avataram. The third is Lord Rama's act of conferring moksham to all sentient and insentient beings that resided in Ayodhya. Svami Desikan captures these three instances through the usage "kR^ipaNa jantu cintAmaNe". When this is the case what is the reason for Svami Desikan's emphasis on the Sethu construction as the main reason for the Rama avataram? The Upanishad declares "amR^itasya esha setuH" Lord Narayana is the prApyam as well as prApaka. In other words, Lord Narayana is the means as well as the end. In this verse Svami Desikan highlights the fact that the Sethu rids one of their sins, making them a fitting receptacle for Lord Narayana's grace enabling them to gain moksham. The second reason is that the Sethu confers well-being on all residents of the universe. It may be remembered that Valmiki Bhagavan poses the question "sarvabhUteShu ko hitaH" to Narada while commencing the Ramayanam. Narada responds that it is none other than Lord Rama. This is another reason for highlighting the hitam through the construction of the Sethu in the Rama avataram. The main reason for this is the Lord's association with Thayar. The avataram is brought about by the efforts of Daya Devi. On this note we conclude the exposition of the Rama avataram."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri.U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! You are bent on doing good to all creatures of the universe. You cannot render anything but good. You are the proverbial Chintamani gemstone that can be knotted in one's garment and be sought for any boon or benefit when


karuNA kAkutstha

the need arises. The gem even becomes ancestral property, handed down from one generation to the next. You are a great boon grantor to the needy and indigent creatures. In a certain age, You had caused Lord Srinivasa to take birth in this world as Lord Rama. Thereby, the ocean was divided into two parts by a bridge (Sethu) built; it is a connection between two land-ends. That the Sethu helped Rama and the Vanara army to walk into Lanka for waging war against Ravana is insignificant. Then what else could be more important? The Sethu needs to be seen just once. At that very moment one's sins are destroyed. Even a bath at that spot is not required. Thus, this bridge serves as the bridge to immortality or Moksham. A few points of importance need to be noted.

1. Once only - seeing the Sethu. Once only - performance of Prapatti. The two actions are not only similar in the operative part, but also related as successive steps in our traditional practice. Our Acharyas prescribe a pilgrimage to Sethu prior to the performance of Prapatti. The key idea is that when one is freed from one's heinous sins by sethu sight and sethu snanam, the Lord becomes delighted and greatly satisfied. Thus, such an offering at the feet of the Acharya, who administers the rite of prapatti, is joyfully received by Lord Narayana. The act of pleasing Lord Narayana is further elaborated upon in Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram.

2. Leave alone the numerous inspiring, good, and extraordinary acts of Lord Rama. These can be found in upanyasams, and written commentaries. He is also glorified for these acts through songs composed by numerous saints. One cardinal aspect of this avataram is the holy Sethu. That He used it to cross the ocean to reach Lanka is only incidental. More importantly, it helps us all without discrimination of any kind to serve as the bridge to liberation - Moksham. This is according to Lord Rama's own assurance in the Rama Charma slokam.

3. RamA sahacAram. This becomes important exclusively in this context. The consort was not of importance in the Trivikrama avataram or Bhargava Rama avataram. However, here, Thayar's arrival in Lanka was a pre-condition for the construction of the Sethu. The inner meaning is that for the success of one's Prapatti, Thayar's Kataksham becomes a pre-requisite. Thus it is important for Thayar's arrival to pave the way for building the Sethu!

4. The poetic usage by Kavi-Tarkika-Simham deserves appreciation. It is implicit. Svami Desikan demonstrates his adeptness in Vyangya poetry. We shall dwell on this briefly. Daya Devi caused Lord Srinivasa to be born as Rama. She ensured that He was accompanied by Sita. Thereby, Daya Devi set the stage for construction of the Sethu. The ocean was divided into two parts by this bridge.

Seeing the bridge once is enough. The reward for this act comes about at that very instant. What is the reward? One's worst sins are destroyed as if they are mere trifles. Sethu is the cause for such an unbelievable phenomenon.

5. There is a verse that the young Yamunacharya had to send to the Chola court in which he had to spell out his vast equipment. He refers to the Sethu on the south as a border. He declares that Sethu delights Sita. Was it due to the fact that it helped Rama's army cross and bring Her back from Lanka? Most definitely not. This is only an excuse for the construction of the bridge. The real reason is that it gave Sita Devi immense delight to enable the liberation of numerous souls and afford them the benefit of adorning the chest of Lord Narayana in the manner of the Kaustubha gem (Recall the salutation "maNivara iva shaure nitya hR^idyopa jIvaH" from Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram)."



Slokam 88

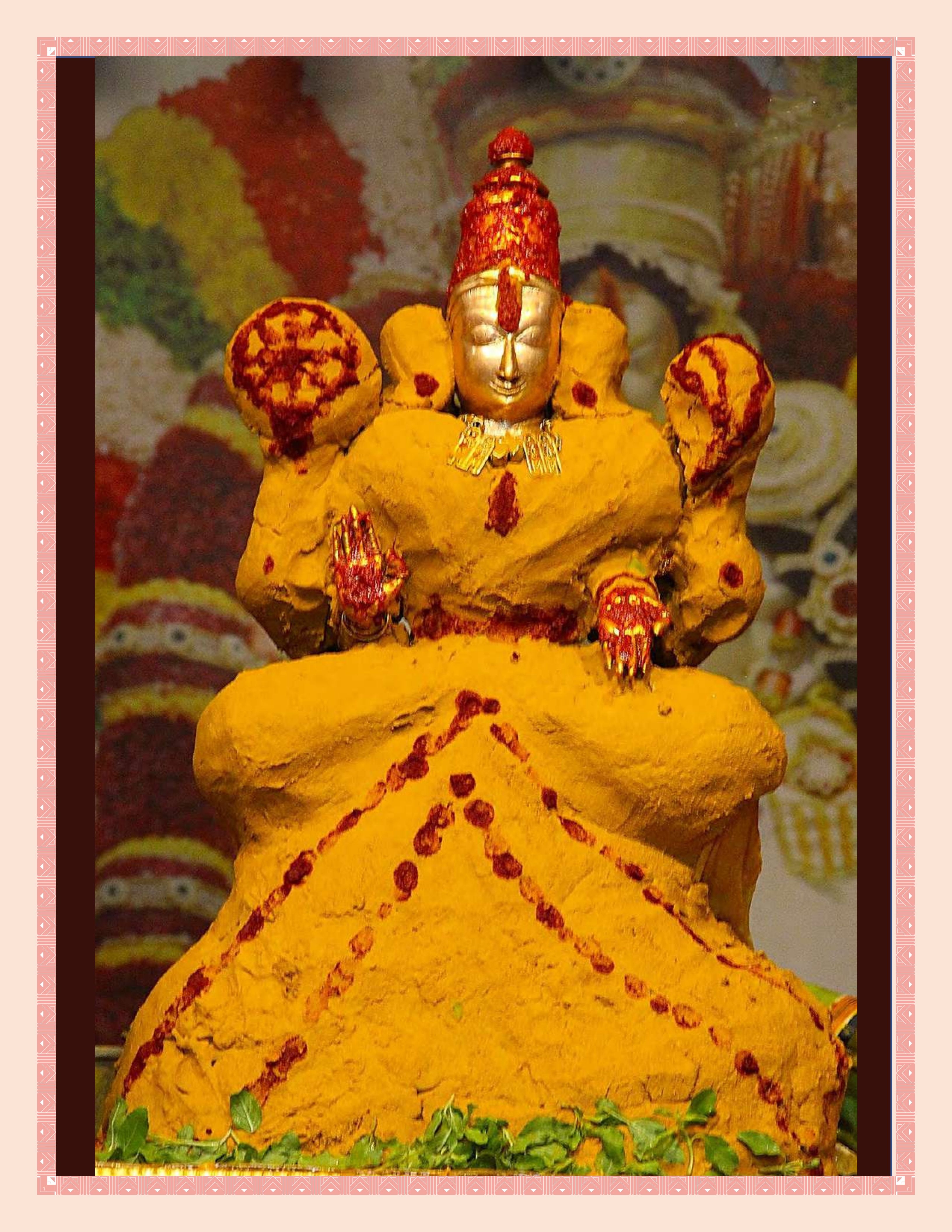
कृपे परवतस्त्वया वृषगिरीशितुः क्रीडितं
जगद्धितमशेषतस्तदिदमित्थमर्थाप्यते ।
मदच्छल परिच्युत प्रणत दुष्कृत प्रेक्षितैः
हत प्रबल दानवैर्हलधरस्य हेला शतैः ॥ ८८ ॥

kR^ipe paravatas tvayA vR^iShagirIshituH krIDitaM
jagadhitaM asheShatastadidaM itthaM arthApyate|
madacChala paricyuta praNata duShkR^ita prekShitaiH
hata prabala dAnavair haladharasya helA shataiH||88

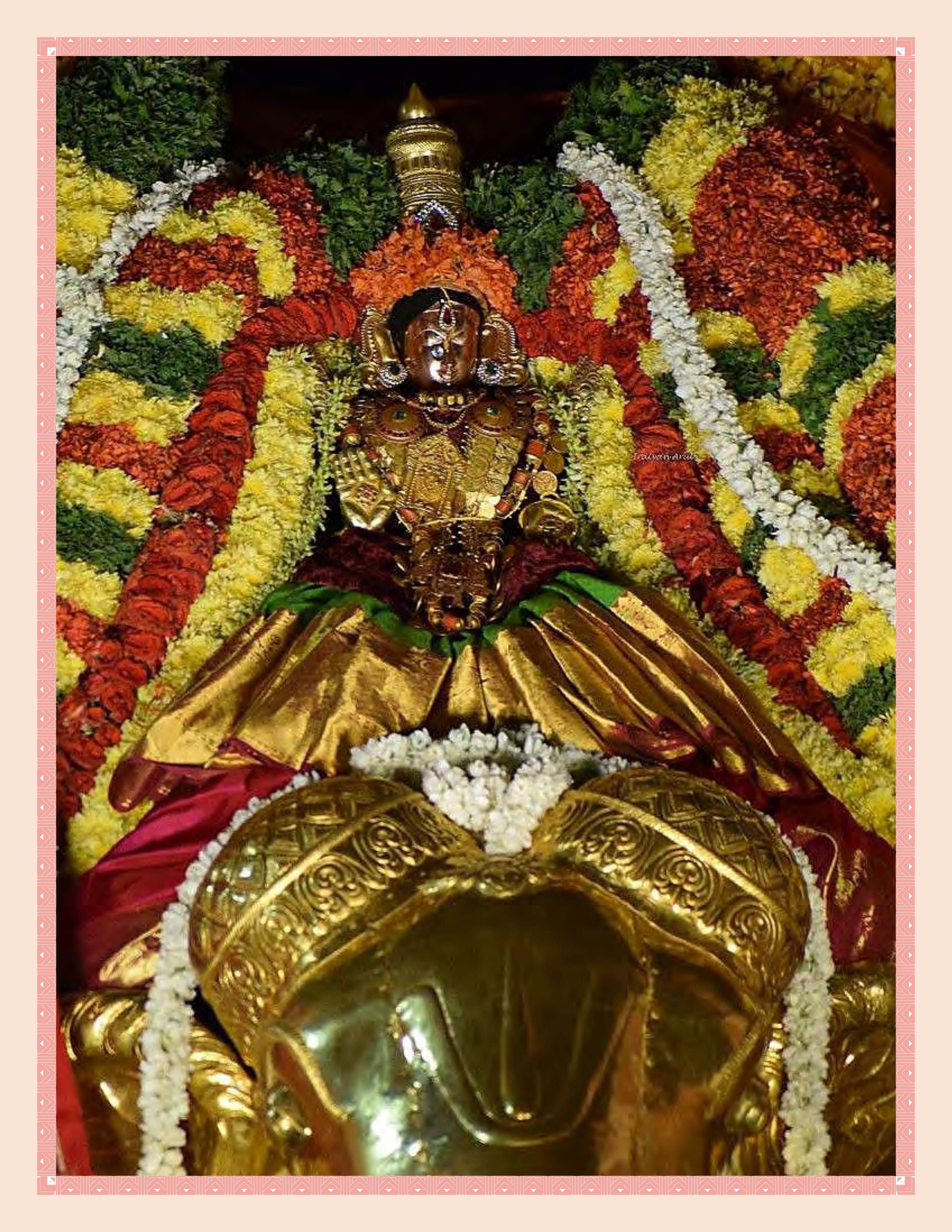


We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The 88th verse is "kR^ipe paravatas tvayA vR^iShagirIshituH krIDitaM jagadhitaM asheShatastadidaM itthaM arthApyate madacChala paricyuta praNata duShkR^ita prekShitaiH hata prabala dAnavair haladharasya helA shataiH". This glorifies the Balarama avataram. The previous verse highlighted the glory of the Rama avataram, wherein it was exposited that if a male form were to be assigned to the Daya guNam, it would be none other than Lord Rama. Lord Narayana took the incarnation of Rama in response to the sharaNAgati from the Devas, who requested relief from Ravana's torture. It could also be said that Lord Narayana incarnated as Rama to protect the yaj~na of Vishvamitra. Another reason for this incarnation is for the "carama ruNa vimocanam" of Dasharatha (namely discharging the debt of offering tarpaNam and shraddham to ancestors continuously by having progeny). The avataram could also have come about to bring great joy to the Maharishis inhabiting the forest, who were able to engage in their tapas uninterrupted due to the protection afforded by Lord Rama by wiping out the entire rakshasa clan. While these acts of Lord Rama prevailed at a certain time, the construction of the great bridge ensured the well-being of the entire universe for all time. Hence, Svami Desikan affirms that the sole purpose of the Rama avataram was for constructing the great bridge. The great upakaram of the Rama avataram brought about due to the efforts of Daya Devi ensured that a mere sighting once of the bridge destroys the gravest of sins committed. This fact was established in the



previous verse. It becomes readily evident in certain incarnations such as Narasimha, Rama, and Krishna that the sole aim was to protect those who had sought refuge and destroy the enemies of those who had sought refuge. However, this fact may come into question when one examines avatarams such as Parashurama and Balarama. In this verse Svami Desikan establishes the fact that even though the protection of those who have sought refuge is not explicit, the purpose of the Balarama avataram was entirely for their protection. The sambodhanam for Daya Devi in this verse is "kR^ipe". The tribute "tvayA paravataH vR^iShagirIshituH krIDitaM" is examined next. "paravataH" denotes the fact that due to the effort of Daya Devi, Balarama is not in control of Himself. He does not act on His own volition. Instead, He is definitely bound by the dictates of Daya Devi. The tribute "asheShatasta jagadhitaM bhavati" denotes the fact that all the actions of Balarama, controlled by Daya Devi, which may be in the form of sport, ensure the well-being of the universe. In this context, it is helpful to observe the difference between the terms "hitam" and "priyam". The former is intended for the well-being, while the latter denotes something that is pleasing. That which is intended for one's well-being need not necessarily be pleasing. For example, a sick child can be treated by a doctor, who administers painful injections to cure the illness. While this ensures the well-being of the child, the experience is certainly not pleasant. Similarly, someone suffering from stomach-ache may need to undergo surgery for cure. While the surgery is definitely to ensure well-being, it is certainly not pleasant. Similarly, that which is pleasing may not be for one's well-being. For example, one suffering from diabetes exhibits extreme fondness for sweets such as jangiri, shakkarai pongal, and ksheerannam. However, while these delicacies are sweet tasting, they certainly worsen the disease for the individual. On the other hand, someone suffering from illness may go to a doctor, who prescribes sweet-tasting medicine. This ensures the well-being of the individual and at the same time is pleasant. Likewise, in the case of Lord Narayana's actions, not only do they ensure the well-being but are also inherently pleasing. This comes about due to the fact that the acts of Lord Narayana are carried out at the behest of Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that even though the actions of Lord Narayana are intended to ensure the well-being of the entire universe, Daya Devi causes them to be pleasing as well. Another important detail needs to be observed here. Lord Narayana is glorified as "avApta samastA kAman"- one who is capable of accomplishing everything that he desires. Superficially, this glorification could mean one whose desires are fulfilled without exception. This could have a misleading impression that at one time his desires may not have been realized but



were subsequently fulfilled. However, this interpretation is incorrect. Instead, the correct import of this tribute is one who is capable of accomplishing/realizing everything that he desires. He does not require help from anyone to realize these desires. For example, the tasks of creation, dissolution, and dispensing justice to those that are near the end of their lives are delegated by Lord Narayana to Brahma, Shiva, and Yama, respectively. If one were to ask is there a specific delegation of tasks to Lord Narayana? the answer is negative. Instead, Lord Narayana engages in the act of creation, protection, and destruction of the universe as a sport. Therefore, these are denoted as His leelas. The Brahma Sutras affirm this through the statement "lokavattu lIlA kaivalyam". The implication of this tribute is that Lord Narayana carries out the task of ensuring the well-being of the universe as a sporting act. Svami Desikan echoes this sentiment through the tribute "vR^iShagirIshituH krIDitaM" in this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, Lord Narayana engages in the act of creation, sustenance, and dissolution as an act of sport rather than as a task for yielding Him specific benefit. Furthermore, it is documented in this verse that Lord Narayana is subservient to Daya Devi. What happens if this is not the case? An interesting side story is briefly summarized in this context. Grains were strung up a pole and watched by a person who had a limp due to a deformity. He was instructed to keep a close watch so that nobody could steal the grains. There was a raised platform which he used as his seat. From here he would watch passersby. On occasion, he would summon weary passers with the invitation "It is sweltering hot. Relieve yourself of the fatigue by drinking water and partaking of some of the edible grains here." If someone took him up on the offer, the moment he descended from his seat, he would start chiding them with harsh words such as "This belongs to someone else. How dare you steal these grains?" The same person when seated on the raised platform, was filled with noble thoughts and desired to act in a manner that was pleasant to ensure the well-being of the passersby. However, when he descended from his seat, he acted in the exact opposite manner. Upon observing this, everyone wondered how this inconsistency could come about. They concluded that this had to do with the raised platform that he used as his seat. Upon digging up the raised platform they discovered the throne of King Vikramaditya, which was famous for bestowing wisdom and noble thoughts to anyone that sat on the throne. This illustrates the concept of "paravasham". When one was in control of the throne, noble thoughts and actions ensued. However, bereft of this influence, other inherent tendencies took over. In a like manner, it is helpful to examine the actions of Lord Narayana when He is under the command of Daya Devi and when He is not. It must be remembered that the



inherent nature of Lord Narayana is that of "daNDa dharatvam" (one who dispenses benefits/punishment in accordance with one's good or bad karma). However, when the Lord is under Daya Devi's command, His essential nature is transformed into one of acting to solely ensure the well-being of the entire universe. In the context of the Balarama avataram, He was constantly partaking of "hAla" (intoxicating liquor). Intoxication results in one losing control of one's senses and acting in an inexplicable and strange manner. As a consequence, His behavior was completely altered. The cause for this change was also Daya Devi. What was the change brought about? It transformed the Lord from His "daNDa dharan" disposition of meting out results in accordance with one's karma to one that completely ignored the faults of His supplicants. This came about due to "madhya pAnam", which is documented in the tribute "madacChala paricyuta praNata duShkR^ita prekShitaiH" (When one has consumed the intoxicating liquor, one tends to forget things. In this instance, Daya Devi causes Balarama to forget the transgressions of errant jivans. As a result, He ignores the faults of those who have sought refuge.) It is instructive to observe the usage of "paricyuta". This denotes the fact that due to intoxication; the faults of His supplicants slip by without being noticed. This is different from the usage "parityakta", where the Lord knowing fully well the errors of His supplicants causes them to vanish. In this instance, the intoxication causes these faults to slip by unnoticed. This is an act of Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that when a container is full to the point of overflow, a few items spill over. In this instance, the supplicants are replete with faults in a like manner. The act of Daya Devi while inducing intoxication of the Lord causes the faults of the supplicants to be completely ignored. It must be noted that "madacChala" is merely an excuse for the Lord to act in this manner. Would we expect Lord Narayana to engage in "madhya pAnam"? Lord Narayana is glorified as sarvaj~nar (all-knowing) and sarvashaktar (all powerful). How then could He be swayed under the influence of intoxication? It must be understood in this context that the intoxication is a mere pretext (vyAjam) in order to accomplish the task of protecting those who have sought refuge. For example, Lord Rama expressed grief like a common human being upon discovering that Sita had been abducted. Such was His grief that He began enquiring of beasts and insentients such as rivers and trees if they had seen Sita. Similarly in the incarnation of Krishna, Lord Narayana endured great travails. One may ask: Was it not possible for Lord Rama to discern Sita's location in an instant on account of His Sankalpam? Why was He grief-stricken like an ordinary human? It must be understood that Lord Rama befriended Sugriva, a monkey, ensured his coronation as the king of Kishkinda and sought his help to locate Sita only as an act



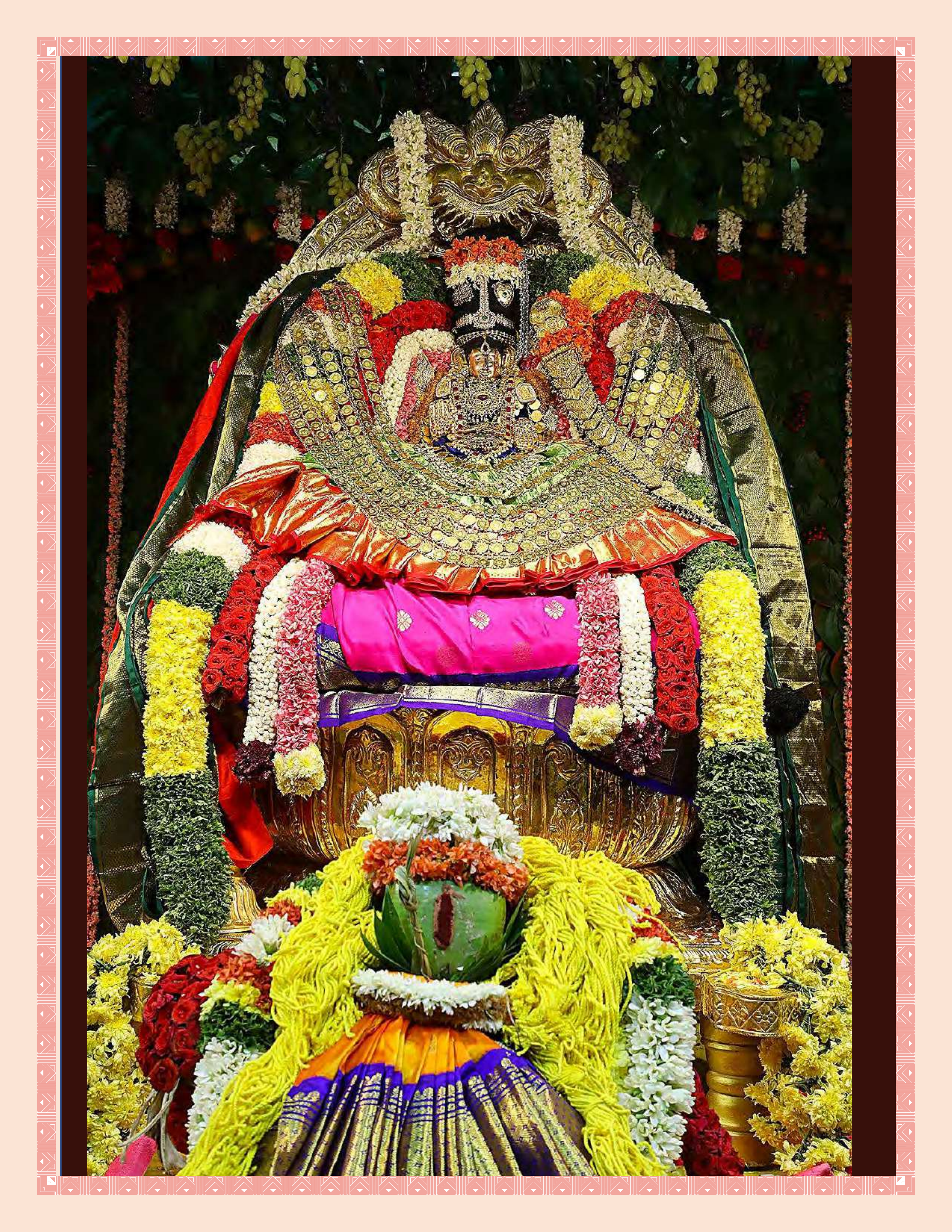
of sport (lIla) to demonstrate to the universe His easy accessibility. So too is His act of Madhya pAnam (intoxication) in the avataram of Balarama. It must also be remembered that intoxication can result in indiscriminate behavior producing extreme consequences (good and bad). For instance, under the influence of liquor a well-mannered person could engage in vile behavior accompanied by the use of foul language. On the other hand, one who is forever engaged in bad behavior and is foul mouthed can be transformed into a well-mannered individual under the influence of liquor. In the instance of the Balarama avataram, good comes about due to the intoxication. This is documented in the tribute "paricyuta praNata duShkR^ita prekShitaiH" (As a consequence of intoxication, the transgressions of supplicants slip by unnoticed.) Only when Lord Narayana takes cognizance of one's transgressions does the question of meting out appropriate punishment arise. If the transgressions remain hidden from His sight, the issue of meting out punishment becomes moot.

In this context, it is helpful to recall from a prior tribute of the Daya Satakam (Verse 8) "bhAvitaM shrInivAsasya bhaktadoSheShvadarshanam" (While glorifying NIla Devi, Svami Desikan affirms that She causes the sins of a supplicant to be hidden from the view of Lord Srinivasa.) What is it that Balarama accomplished? He served as the Acharya for Pandavas as well as the Kauravas by instructing Bhima and Duryodhana in the art of wielding the mace. As a result, even for Duryodhana, who was an "ArdhrAparadhi" (most egregious offender in terms of engaging in sinful acts), Balarama ignored his faults and only offered His blessings. Lord Krishna was fearful of the Kauravas gaining the protection of Balarama, which would render them invincible. However, Lord Krishna brought about a circumstance that caused Balarama to undertake a tirtha yatra (pilgrimage to holy places) to coincide with the Kurukshetra war and thereby ensured that the Pandavas would be victorious. While this is an aside, the point of importance in the context of the Balarama avataram was His disposition of anugraham towards the great sinner Duryodhana. This was brought about by Daya Devi. The tribute "praNata duShkR^ita prekShitaiH:" can also be viewed as "prabala duShkR^ita prekShitaiH" denoting the fact that even the most heinous of crimes were forgiven by Balarama. The next tribute from this Daya Satakam verse "hata prabala dAnavaiH" denotes the fact that he killed several powerful rakshasas. The implication is that Balarama is more powerful than these rakshasas. This is an illustration by comparison. Lord Rama is hailed as the great warrior who killed powerful Rakshasas like Ravana and Kumbhakarna among others. From this act it becomes clear that Lord Rama was more powerful than these Rakshasas. In a like manner the "hata prabala dAnavaiH"

salutation of this Daya Satakam verse alludes to the fact that by killing powerful Rakshasas, Balarama established that He was more powerful than these Rakshasas. The tribute "haladharasya helA shataiH" from this Daya Satakam verse attests to the fact that the weapon that Balarama used was the plow. Each avataram exhibits the prowess of Lord Narayana with a specific weapon. In the case of Bhargava Rama, it was the axe. In the case of Lord Rama, it was the bow. In the instance of the Balarama avataram, the weapon of choice was the plow. He performed extraordinary acts with this weapon. Once, He dragged the city of Hastinapura with His plow to bring it closer to the Yamuna river. Thus, land which was previously parched was transformed into fertile ground due to proximity of the Yamuna river. The reason for this is documented in the tribute "helA shataiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, even in the Balarama avataram, Lord Narayana ensured the well-being of all through His numerous heroic acts with the plow as evidenced by the Daya Satakam tribute "haladharasya helA shataiH itthaM arthApyate". This gives rise to a visesham for Lord Narayana in that all His incarnations are meant to ensure the well-being of the entire universe. In this context several questions arise. In the incarnation as Buddha, Lord Narayana provided an instruction that invalidated the purport of the Vedas. It must be remembered that every word of the Vedam is intended to guide us on the correct path. Thus, Buddha's instruction runs contrary to the tribute "jagadhitaM asheShata" of this Daya Satakam verse, with the usage "asheShataH" denoting the fact that all of Lord Narayana's incarnations without exception are meant for ensuring the well-being of the universe. When this is the case, how could the action of Buddha be accounted for as ensuring the well-being of the entire universe? Among the followers who do not accept the authority of the Vedas, the Bauddha camp is the foremost. It is only after them that the Jain followers came about. Even the Sankhya following accepts the authority of the Vedam. However, their interpretation of Vedic passages differ from those of other faiths that accept the authority of the Vedam. The Bauddha tradition was established by Buddha who was an incarnation of Lord Narayana. Since this is the foremost following that does not accept the authority of the Vedam how could this act result in the well-being of the universe is an important question. The Kaushitaki Upanishad salutation "eSha hyevainan sAdhukarma kArayati tan yamanvAnuneShati" sheds light on this issue. (If one performs a good act, Lord Narayana ensures that they reach the threshold from which He makes them climb a ladder in a step-by-step manner to ensure elevation.) The upanishad further declares "eSha evainamasAdhu karma kArayati tan yamebhyo lokebhyo nunutsata" (One who engages in despicable acts is forced to descend deeper and deeper into



an abyss.) "kShipAM yajasraM AdhureShyeva yoniShu" is another tribute of relevance in the context of those who are given to engaging in despicable acts. The import of this tribute is that those engaged in despicable acts are forced to take birth as asuras due to Lord Narayana's sankalpam. They frequently engage in vile acts of increasing intensity with vicarious delight, causing them to only descend deeper into a mire from which there is no redemption. This raises the question whether the birth in the asura clan caused by Lord Narayana is an act that ensures well-being. If yes, how so? First off, this act comes about at the initiative of Daya Devi. Lord Narayana has to mete out punishment to those engaged in vile acts. For example, if a child engages in a forbidden act that is ignored by parents, the child may reason that this one time it was possible to escape punishment. On the other hand, if the child repeatedly engages in these acts, the parents must step in to take corrective action. Otherwise, this becomes a serious dereliction of duty on the part of the parents. In this instance, Lord Narayana is the father of the entire universe. If He ignores repeat violations on the part of His children, it would be a significant failure to discharge His duty. Thus, Lord Narayana becomes obligated to mete out punishment to these errant children. On the other hand, if His children engage in acts that are pleasing and incur the anugraha sankalpam (blessing) of Lord Narayana, He encourages them to engage in more of the same, thereby paving the way for their elevation. In the context of the Buddha avataram, it is helpful to now examine the act of the Lord. Specifically, He established the prime following of those opposed to the authority of the Vedam. This appeals to a certain segment of people. The followers of Bauddha tradition are sanyasis, who partake of meat. The Jains on the other hand do not partake of meat. Therefore, it becomes clear that the Bauddhas do not practice ahimsa, while the Jains place a premium on ahimsa. Be this as it may, the main reason for the Buddha avataram was to institute a following that is opposed to the tenets of the Vedam so that it appeals to those who are inimical to the sharaNAgatas of Lord Narayana. This causes them to engage in repeated vile acts resulting in their descent deeper and deeper into mire and eventually leading to their destruction. While this ensured the well-being of the sharaNAgatas, it certainly had the detrimental impact of an increasing segment of people questioning the validity of the Vedam. How then could this be an act of hitam? To completely restore the validity of the Vedam and establish their tenets on firm ground, Lord Narayana brought about the incarnation of great Acharyas such as SvAmi Bhashyakarar and SvAmi Deshikan, who thoroughly and forcefully refuted the flawed position of the Bauddha following. This is undoubtedly an act of compassion on the part of Lord Narayana, since it not only brought about the



protection of those who had surrendered to Him but also unambiguously restored the validity of the Vedam through a demolition of the arguments of the Bauddha following. It may be recalled from the salutation "mAyAshAstrANyapi damayituM tvat prapanna pratIpAn" in verse 47 of the Daya Satakam that the MAyA shAstram came about with the express purpose of annihilating those inimical towards Prapannas. At the same time protection of the Prapannas needed to come about. For this purpose, it was necessary for Lord Narayana to send forth geniuses like Svami Bhashyakarar and Svami Deshikan at the insistence of Daya Devi to unambiguously and forcefully establish the validity of the Vedam. Thus, the two-fold objective of protecting those who have sought refuge as well as the annihilation of those inimically inclined towards these supplicants is brought about by Lord Narayana. Therefore, all acts of Lord Narayana are intended solely to ensure the well-being of the universe (hitam). Thus, even the Buddha avataram ultimately resulted only in hitam as evidenced by the "asheShataH" description of this Daya Satakam verse. A few shiksha viseshams are highlighted. In this context, the salutation "yasyAnugrahaM icChAmi dhanamtasya harAmyaham" (I take away the wealth of those I decide to grace) becomes relevant. It may be asked how can this act be considered anugraham? Does it mean that Lord Narayana would intentionally cause one to become poor before showering His grace? For instance, when Lord Narayana decides to bestow His grace on an individual, He deprives the individual of all near and dear ones and perhaps even causes the individual to undergo health travails. Does this constitute anugraham or nigraham? From a commonly held worldly perspective this would undoubtedly count as nigraham. However, in the eyes of Lord Narayana it is not so. As long as the individual is endowed with wealth, there will be no thought of Lord Narayana. Only when the wealth is gone would the mind turn towards Lord Narayana. Thus, only to bring about the BhagavannAma sankirtanam for the individual does the Lord take away all wealth. Other acts too are accounted for similarly. Hence, when one encounters difficulty, it is easy to think that they are being subjected to the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana. However, the shastras point out that the opposite is true. One may ask adiyen "you expound on this very eloquently in your upanyasam. Do you follow this in practice? For example, if one loses money does one regret the loss or think of it as a manner of expending some accumulated bad karma?" Svami Desikan covers these aspects and more in the svaniShtabhij~nAnAdhikAram of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. Svami Desikan specifically notes that if one is abused as a blind one or a short one, the abuse is only directed at the bodily form and not the Atma (soul), which is blemishless. Since the abuse is directed only at the transient bodily



form and not the Atma, it is not in any way an abuse of the individual. Therefore, this need not be taken seriously and can be at once dismissed. What then can be said with respect to one's actions in terms of the abuse? The abuse rids the abused of their bad karma. The abuser instead accrues all the bad karma from the abused. Also, the good karma from the abuser gets transferred to the abused. This is captured in the tribute "shApAntamadhigacChati". Since the abuser is accruing all the bad karma of the abused, the disposition of a Prapanna towards the abuser must be one of extreme compassion and must express regret for the abuser having to endure the consequences of the Prapanna's bad karma. We now return to the issue of one losing one's wealth. Can the individual adopt the disposition documented in the salutation "yasyAnugrahaM icChAmi dhanamtasya harAmyaham" and think of himself as being graced by the Lord on account of which he has lost his wealth? Great mahatmas have acted thus. However, is this possible for commoners? If they have not developed this disposition, it only reflects the fact that they lack the maturity and poise to gain an appreciation of the important messages from the Shastras. In the Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram "kaiyAr cakkarattu en karumANikkamE enRenRu poiyE kaimmai colli puRamE puRamE ADi meiyE peRRozhintEn vitivAikkinRu kAppArAr aiyO kaNNa pirAn aRaiyO ini pOnAlE" Svami NammAzhvar documents the fact that one may for the purpose of engaging an audience extol the glory of the Lord in terms of His matchless Divya Mangala Vigraham, the one who has the color of the rain-bearing cloud and the like. Even if this an act put on for the purpose of captivating an audience and not a heartfelt rendition, the anugraham of Lord Narayana prevails. Adiyen would like to narrate a personal instance in this context. Due to a number of constraints adiyen could not go to the Varadaraja Svami Temple and offer prostrations for about ten days. However, once things cleared up, adiyen was able to go and offer prostration at the feet of Lord Varadaraja. There is a place known as abhisheka mandapam, where the Utsava murti arrived bereft of any abharaNams (decoration and jewelry). He only had the yaj~nopavItam, a waist band, and may be a couple of other accessories, while wearing mayilkan vastram (not silk). There was only a single strand necklace that adorned Lord Varadaraja and Perundevi Thayar. Upon beholding this sight of Lord Varadaraja, adiyen was overwhelmed with tears at this astonishingly beautiful sevai. One may as a matter of routine perfunctorily offer prostrations and submit a stotram or two while gaining a darsanam of Lord Narayana. However, the mind may not be completely focused on the Lord. In this instance adiyen was rendered speechless by the astonishing sevai and began to wonder what apacharam adiyen had committed to be deprived of this sevai for a



ten day period. It is only after the fact that adiyen realized that the punishment of lack of sevai for ten days caused adiyen to be fully engaged and completely enjoy this anubhavam of Perumal sevai. It is hard for adiyen to say if the same anubhavam would have resulted had he been blessed with daily sevai over the past ten days. This is true especially of Bhagavatas who reside in distant lands and do not get to enjoy the daily sevai of Bhagavan. However, this creates a sense of intense longing and when the opportunity arises, the anubhavam of Bhagavan becomes exquisite and fulfilling. Thus, adiyen realizes that even this apparent act of punishment in depriving adiyen of the opportunity of Varadaraja Perumal Sevai for ten days was in fact a blessing, which caused adiyen to fully engage in the sevai of Perumal when it came about. Thus, the acts of hitam undertaken in every avataram of Lord Narayana incurs an inherent pleasantness on account of the association of Daya Devi with every act. This is described in the tribute "vR^iShagirIshituH krIDitaM" of this Daya Satakam verse denoting the fact that Lord Srinivasa as an act of sport undertook the avataram of Balarama. His actions of hitam in this avataram acquired pleasantness on account of association with Daya Devi. This concludes the exposition of this Daya Shatakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin. "When the Lord took the incarnation of Balarama, He was again subservient to Daya Devi. He was known for many masterly miracles albeit as a mere sport. He had a weakness for liquor. Even under its influence, perhaps causing us to imagine, although baselessly, that under the influence of liquor, He would ignore our sins. Oh Daya Devi, the truth is that it is a mere pretext for ignoring the transgression of dear ones who are attached to Him. He does not reckon any such action, because the surrendered one is so dear to Him. Even if the sin is serious, He disregards it. It is neither weakness nor inebriety. It is entirely out of His fondness for His children. He is influenced by You. He is faithful to You, Oh Daya Devi! Balarama has many sportive achievements. He has also wiped out several asuras. This establishes that His actions are entirely for the good of the world. Incidentally, even if Balarama's character is dictated by Daya, Vatsalya, and the good of the world, what to say of the other avataras of the Lord-sans weaknesses. These need to be understood as acts prompted by Daya Devi for the overall good of the world."



Slokam 89

प्रभूत विबुध द्विषद्भरण खिन्न विश्वंभरा-

भरापनयनच्छलात् त्वमवतार्य लक्ष्मीधरम्।

निराकृतवती दये निगम सौध दीप श्रिया

विपश्चिदविगीतया जगति गीतयाऽन्धं तमः॥ ८९॥

prabhUta vibudha dviShad bharaNa khinna visvaMbharA

bharApanayanacChalAt tvamavatArya lakShmIdharam|

nirA kR^itavatI daye nigama saudha dIpa shriyA

vipascit avigItayA jagati gItayA(a)ndhaM tamaH||89



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is devoted to the glorification of the Krishna avataram. The verse is "prabhUta vibudha dviShad bharaNa khinna visvaMbharA bharApanayanacChalAt tvamavatArya lakShmIdharam nirA kR^itavatI daye nigama saudha dIpa shriyA vipascit avigItayA jagati gItayA(a)ndhaM tamaH". The glory of the Krishna avataram like that of the Rama avataram is limitless. These two avatarams have been extensively enjoyed with great relish by the Azhvars in their outpourings. In this verse, Svami Desikan encapsulates the anubhavam of Krishna avataram while highlighting the role of Daya Devi in bringing about the avataram. There is a commonality between the Rama avataram and Krishna avataram. This commonality comes about due to Their extraordinary acts, which not only graced those who were fortunate to be born during the time of Their avatarams but also to help residents of the universe for posterity. Specifically, these come about on account of the construction of the bridge across the ocean in the Rama avataram and the instruction of the Bhagavadgita in the Krishna avataram. The latter is a comprehensive step-by-step documentation of what is good and what is bad, literally serving as a manual or code of conduct for mankind. The truths contained therein are applicable for all time and not merely for the time of the avataram. Again, when examined as a leela of the Lord of the universe, this act of blessing us with the instruction of the Bhagavadgita came about with the sole intention of ensuring the well-being of the universe. The superficial reason for the Krishna



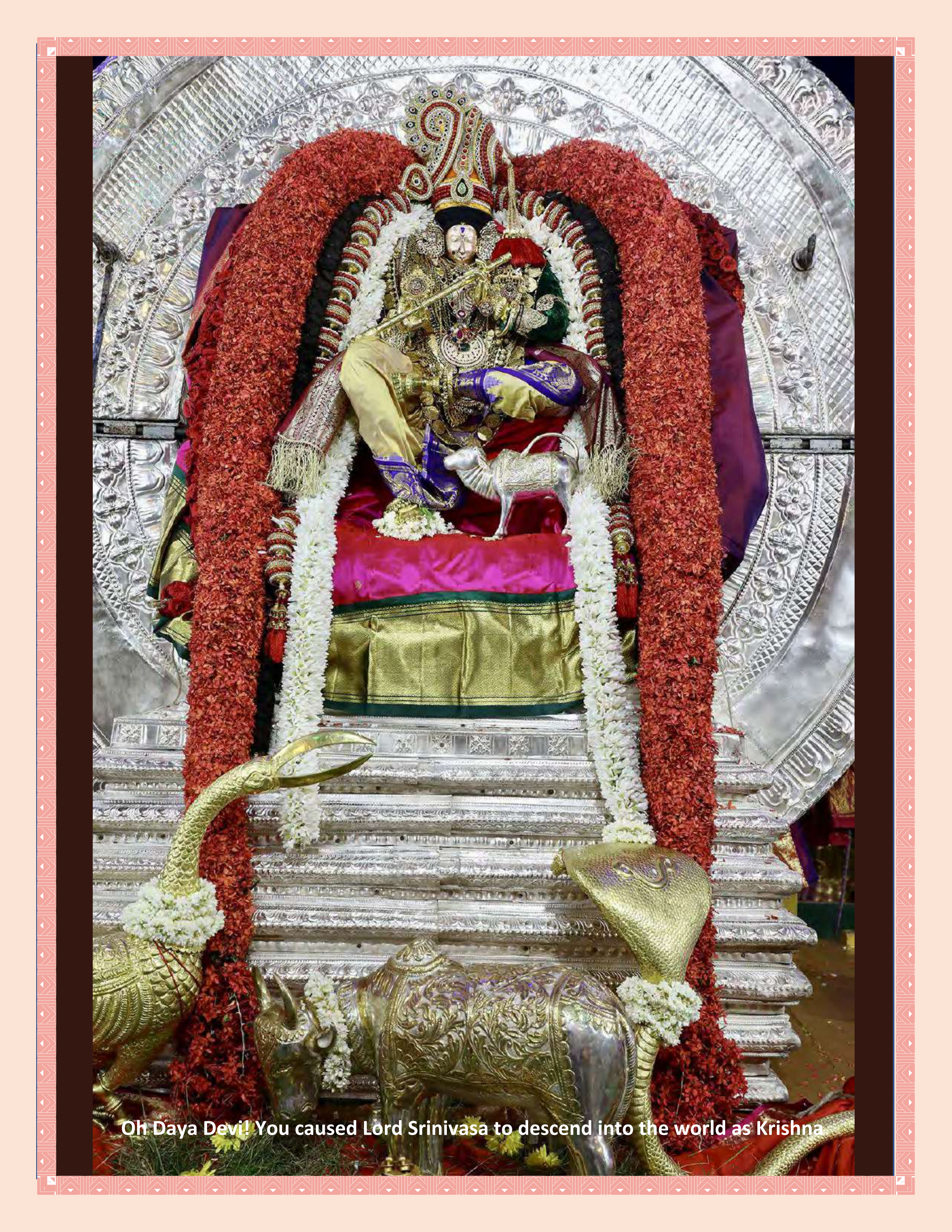
Oh Daya Devi! You have helped dispel mental darkness through the Bhagavad Gita.

avataram is documented in the opening line of this Daya Satakam verse "prabhUta vibudha dviShad bharaNa khinna visvaMbharA bharApanayanacChalAt tvamavatArya lakShmIdharam". Srimad Bhagavatam verse 10.1.17 documents the reason in the tribute "bhUmir dR^ipta nR^ipa vyAja daityAnIka shatAyutaiH AkrAntA bhUri-bhAreNa brahmANaM sharaNaM yayau" Once, Bhumi Devi unable to bear the atrocities of rakshasas like Kamsa, ChANura, Keshi, Trinavarta, and several sinful Kshatriyas appealed to Lord Brahma that She was burdened by their acts and requested relief. This is documented in the Srimad Bhagavatam verse 10.1.18 "gaur bhUtvAshrumukhI khinnA krandantI karuNaM vibhOH upasthitAntike tasmai vyasanaM samavocata" It must be borne in mind that Bhumi Devi is the epitome of forbearance. Her inherent disposition is to forgive the offender even if the individual has committed grave sins. When She was unable to tolerate the atrocities of the rakshasas and kshatriyas, their sinful acts must have been extremely heinous. The various names for Bhumi Devi are glorified in Svami Desikan's Bhustuti verse "sarvaMsahetyavanirityacaleti mAtaH vishvambhareti vipuleti vasundhareti anyAni cAnya vimukhAnyabhidhAna vR^ittyA nAmanyamUni kathayanti tavAnubhavam". Specifically, She is known as sarvam saha (one who tolerates everything). Next is the name "avani", which attests to the fact that She protects all. The glorification "acala" denotes the fact that She is firm like a mountain. This can be appreciated from the fact that most people are pleasant as long as the going is good. However, in times of distress, they are transformed into unrecognizable beings, who engage in the most inexplicable acts. For example, one may be extremely devout and engaged in the service of Lord Narayana and frequently visits temples. However, when confronted by some seemingly insurmountable difficulties, they may reason "All my efforts in serving the Lord and visits to temples are a waste. From this moment, I shall cease to engage in these activities and resort to something that is totally opposite in character." However, Bhumi Devi's disposition is unlike this and is always firm without deviation of any kind. This is captured in the tribute "acaleti". She is also glorified as "vipula" denoting that She is eternal. She is known as vishvambhara due to the fact that She bears the universe. The name vasundhara denotes the fact that She yields fertile soil and is a source of great wealth. All these names are fitting in the case of Bhumi Devi, since She fully exhibits the traits underlying each of them as documented in the salutation "anyAni cAnya vimukhAnyabhidhAna vR^ittyA nAmanyamUni kathayanti tavAnubhavam". For example, one may bear the name Pundarikaksha, but is blind. In this case, the name does not fit the individual. Similarly, another may bear the name "Raja". However, he may be very fearful to behold. In these


sarvapApbheyo mokShayiShyAmi

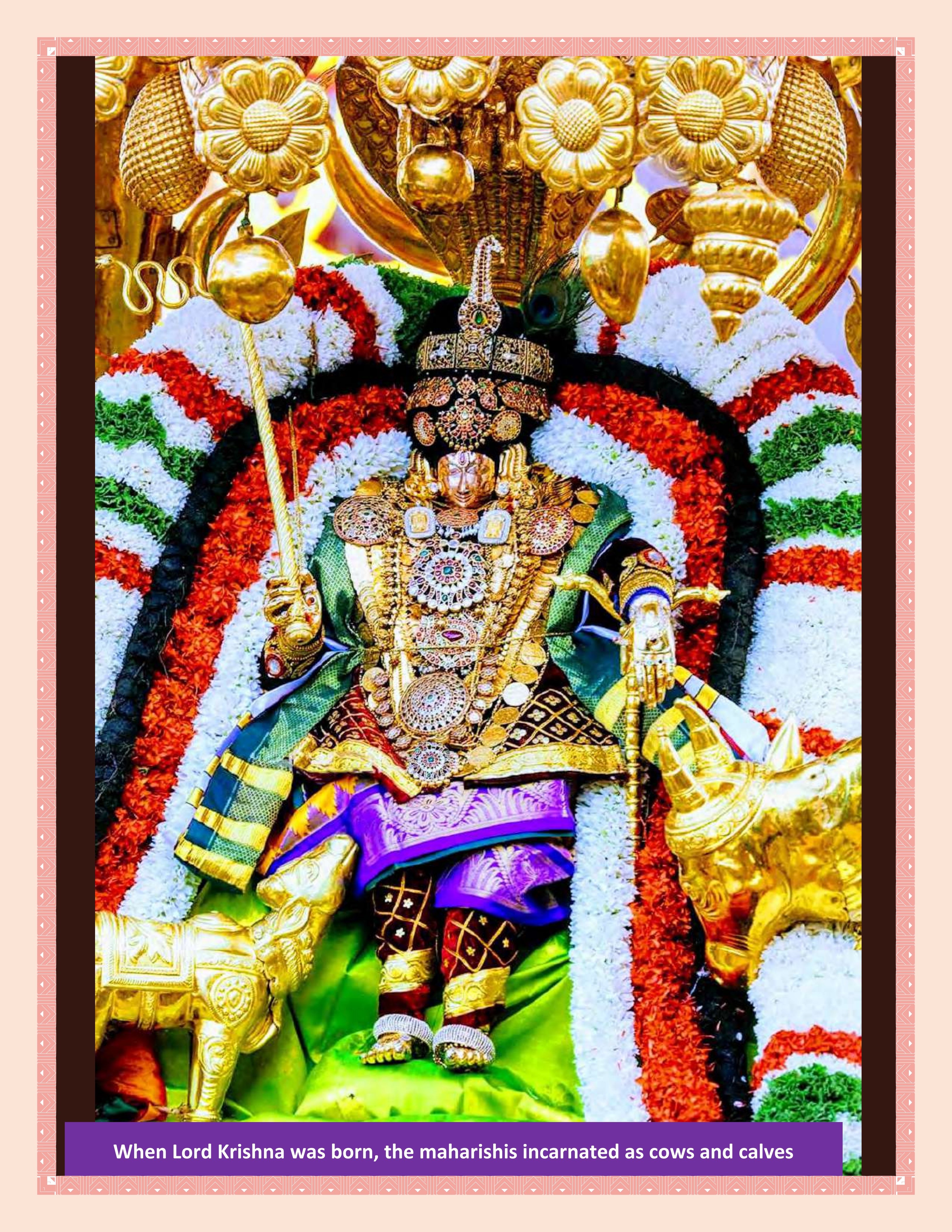
instances, the name may not be an accurate descriptor of the individual. In the case of Bhumi Devi though, She fully exhibits every single trait inherent to Her numerous names. When Bhumi Devi of such lofty attributes is exasperated by the sinful acts of evil rakshasas and kshatriyas and unable to tolerate this anymore, one can only imagine the extreme nature of their sins. Accordingly, taking the form of a cow She submits an appeal to Brahma seeking relief from this suffering. Moved by this appeal, Brahma along with Bhumi Devi conveyed this request to Lord Narayana. In response, Lord Narayana promised that He would incarnate as Krishna and rid Bhumi Devi of Her burden from sinful rakshasas and kshatriyas. He further mentioned that maharishis will incarnate as cows and calves, while Devas will incarnate as inhabitants of the place that Lord Krishna graces with His avataram. Thus, it is established that the prima facie reason for the incarnation as Lord Krishna was to rid Bhumi Devi of Her burden. This becomes evident from the puranic account. This is reflected in the tribute "prabhUta vibudha dviShad bharaNa khinna visvaMbharA bharApanayanacChalAt tvamavatArya lakShmIdharam" of the present Daya Satakam verse.

The important point to note in this context is that it is Daya Devi who is responsible for the avataram of Lord Krishna. How so? Daya Devi used the appeal of Bhumi Devi for relief from the atrocities of evil rakshasas and kshatriyas as a pretext for the Lord to undertake the Krishna avataram. However, the ulterior motive for this act of Daya Devi was to ensure the instruction of the Bhagavadgita, which serves as a manual/code of conduct resulting in the elevation of all and has been preserved for posterity. It is solely to ensure that the Bhagavadgita becomes the ultimate purushArtham for mankind that Daya Devi caused Lord Narayana to incarnate as Krishna. The killing of Kamsa, and other rakshasas/kshatriyas was only incidental and formed a pretext for the Lord's incarnation. In the avatarams of Narasimha and Rama, where the asuras and rakshasas could explicitly be identified, in the Krishna avataram their presence was a lot more subtle and mixed in. Kamsa for example was born in the kshatriya clan. To describe Kamsa and his ilk, Svami Desikan employs the usage "vibudha dviShad bharaNa khinna visvaMbharA". "vibudha" denotes Brahmanas. Thus, "vibudhadviShad" is meant to convey the meaning "those inimical to Brahmanas". These are the rakshasas. Their inherent nature is documented in the Ramayanam tribute "yehi pashya sharIrANi munInAM bhavitAtmanAm" reflecting the fact that they feasted upon the flesh of Maharishis, who engaged in tapas for Lord Narayana as their singular focus and discarded their bones. Thus, Rakshasas are those who are opposed to Tapasvis and Brahmanas. Therefore, even though Kamsa was born as a kshatriya, his

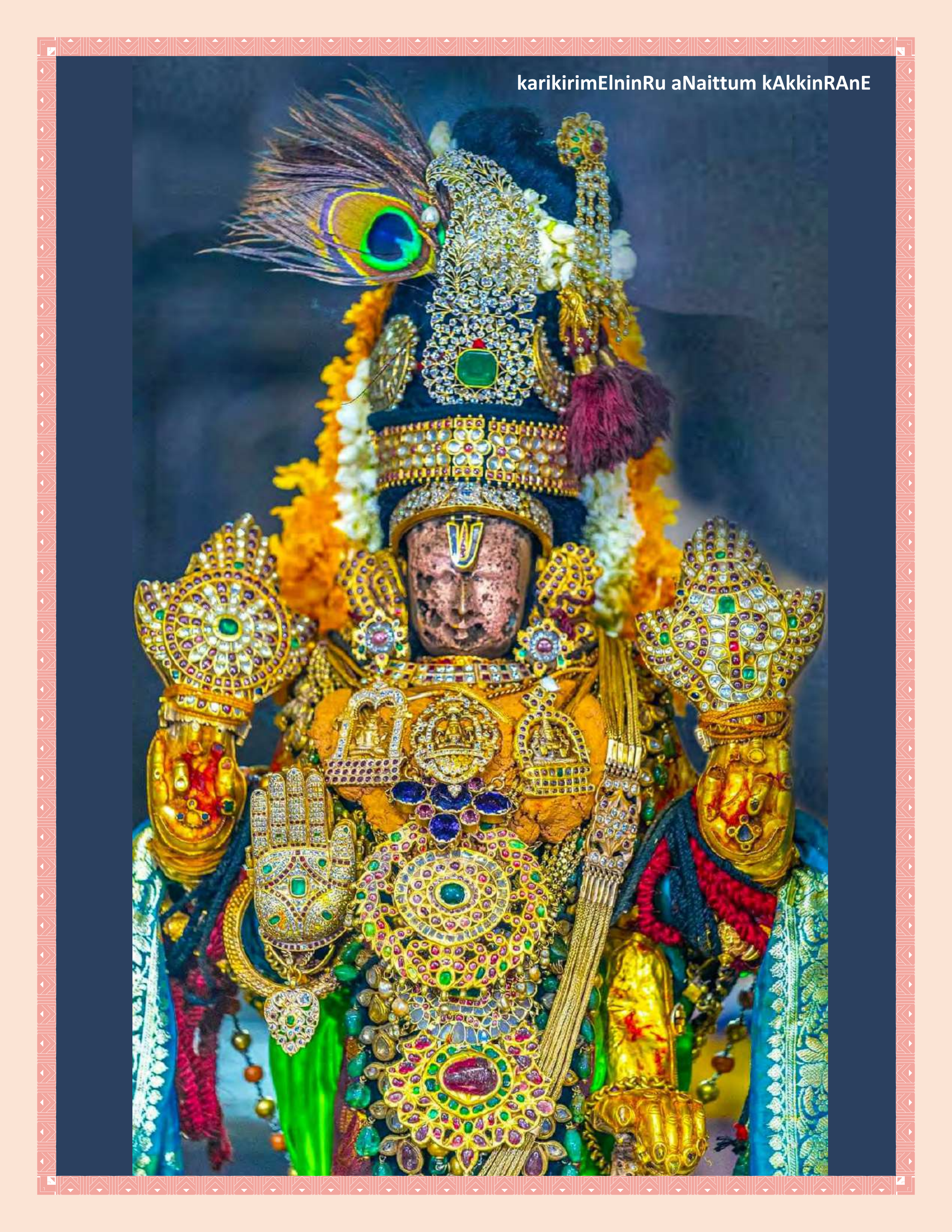

Oh Daya Devi! You caused Lord Srinivasa to descend into the world as Krishna

inherent nature of harassing Brahmanas and noble people like Vasudeva, transformed him into a rakshasa. The destruction of Rakshasas like Kamsa was an excuse for Daya Devi to cause Lord Narayana to incarnate as Krishna. The next visheSham for the Krishna avataram comes about from the tribute "tvamavatArya lakShmIdharam" of this Daya Satakam verse. In the Rama avataram, Svami Desikan employed the usage "ramasahacaram kShitau raghudhurINa yantyA" to describe the fact that Daya Devi brought about the incarnation of Lord Rama along with His consort Sita Devi. Here Svami Desikan documents the fact that Lord Srinivasa, who bears Mahalakshmi in His chest (it is helpful to recall the alarmEl mankai uraimArba tribute from Tiruvaimozhi pasuram where Svami NammAzhvar submitted his formal sharaNAgati.), was prevailed upon to incarnate as Lord Krishna by Daya Devi. The "lakshmIdharam" tribute is intended to reflect the fact that Lord Narayana is accompanied by Mahalakshmi Thayar in each of His incarnations and that She is an active participant in His act of protecting those who have sought refuge. The Vishnu Puranam salutation "rAghavatve abhavat sItA rukmiNi kR^iShNa janmani anyeShu cAvatAreShu viShNornityAnapAyini" highlights this fact quite eloquently. In order to bring out this message from the PuraNam salutation that Lord and His consort together undertake the act of protection of those who have sought refuge and ensure their well-being, Svami Desikan uses the "lakShmIdharam" tribute in this Daya Satakam verse. In the Rama Avataram, Lord Rama behaved like an ordinary human being. Only glimpses of Him as the Supreme Being were on evidence on rare occasions. For example, when Lord Rama required Sita Devi to undertake agni-pravesham upon conclusion of the war with Ravana, Brahma and other Devas questioned if it was appropriate for Lord Rama, the Supreme Being, to suspect His consort, the blemishless Sita Devi, of infidelity in the manner of a common human being. Lord Rama responds to this question as "AtmAnaM mAnushaM manye" (You reveal that I am Mahavishnu. However, as far as I know, I am a common human being born as the son of Dasharatha). It is only in rare instances such as this does Lord Rama demonstrate that He is the Supreme Being. In contrast, the Krishna avataram reveals in every instance that He is the Supreme Being right from the time of His avataram. Even as He was born, He exhibited all the traits of the Supreme Lord, Narayana.

The birth of Lord Krishna is captured in the Srimad Bhagavatam (Verse 10.3.9) tribute "taM adbhutaM bAlakaM ambujekShaNaM caturbhujaM sha~Nkha gadAdyudAyudham shrIvatsalakShmaM galashobhi kaustubhaM pItAmbaraM sAndrapayoda saubhagam" Lord Krishna incarnated as the Lotus-eyed one adorned with His full suite of five weapons (discus, conch, mace, sword, and bow). He bore



When Lord Krishna was born, the maharishis incarnated as cows and calves


karikirimElninRu aNaittum kAkkinRAnE

the mark of the Kausthuba gem, the Srivatsa mole and was wearing the yellow vastram. Now these are features seen in Lord Srinivasa. It is precisely to convey the fact that Lord Srinivasa incarnated as Lord Krishna that Svami Desikan employs the usage "lakShmIdharam". "karikirimElninRu aNaittum kAkkinRAnE" is the tribute that Svami Desikan employs for Lord Varadaraja, while describing Him as Lord Krishna who stands on top of the elephant-hill. Svami NammAzhvar declares in the Tiruvaimozhi pasuram "kunRam Enti kuLir mazhai kAttavan anRu j~nAlam aLanta pirAn paran senRu sEr tiruvE~nkaTa mAmalai onRumE tozha nam vinai OyumE" (He who held aloft the Govardhana Mountain in order to rescue the residents of Gokulam stands on top of the Venkatam hill). This pasuram establishes the equivalence between Lord Srinivasa and Lord Krishna.

In this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan offers by way of Mangalasasanam that due to the efforts of Daya Devi, Lord Srinivasa incarnated as Krishna. This was meant solely to ensure the well-being of the entire universe. Here it may be noted that the Rama avataram is replete with numerous instances of protection of the universe, through the acts of protecting the Maharishis of the Dandaka forest, the killing of Ravana, the protection of Sugriva, through bestowing His grace on the great tapasvini, Shabari, and through His protection of the devatas. However, His anugraham for the universe that remains for all time is through the construction of the great bridge, which viewed just once rids the viewers of their most heinous sins.

Likewise, the Krishna avataram too has a plethora of instances where He ensured the protection of the universe. He killed the rakshasas like Kamsa, graced noble beings like Akrura, and showered His blessings on the garland maker, who even though made the garlands for the king always did so in the spirit of samarpaNam for Lord Narayana. It is significant that Lord Krishna sought out the garland maker by visiting his store rather than the garland maker seeking the grace of Lord Krishna. Not only that, He granted moksham to Dadhi pANDan. He graced the residents of AyarpADi (Gokulam) who lived in the manner of "aRivonRum illAta Aaikulattu" (residents of Gokulam who were common folk bereft of the discerning intellect to realize the Supreme Lord). He graced the Pandavas, who regarded Him as their sole support, friend, and protector. In fact, Lord Krishna declares in the Mahabharata that the Pandavas are extremely dear to His heart, verily regarded as His life breath as evidenced by the salutation "mama prANahi pANDavAH". While these acts are quite extraordinary, there is something more that has withstood the test of time and is relevant even today. This is the instruction of the Bhagavadgita, which has had lasting impact.



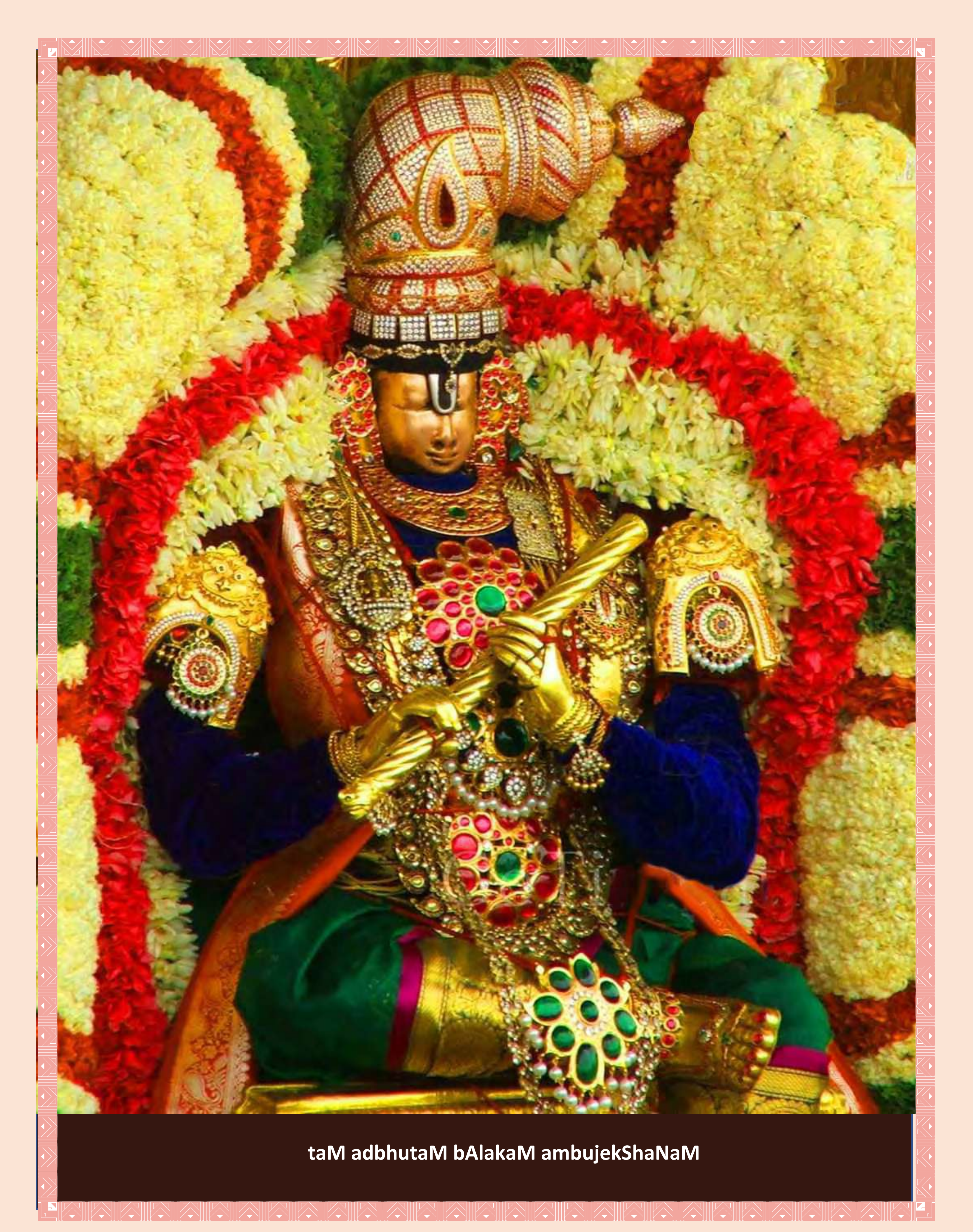
Svami Desikan glorifies Lord Srinivasa as Lord Krishna



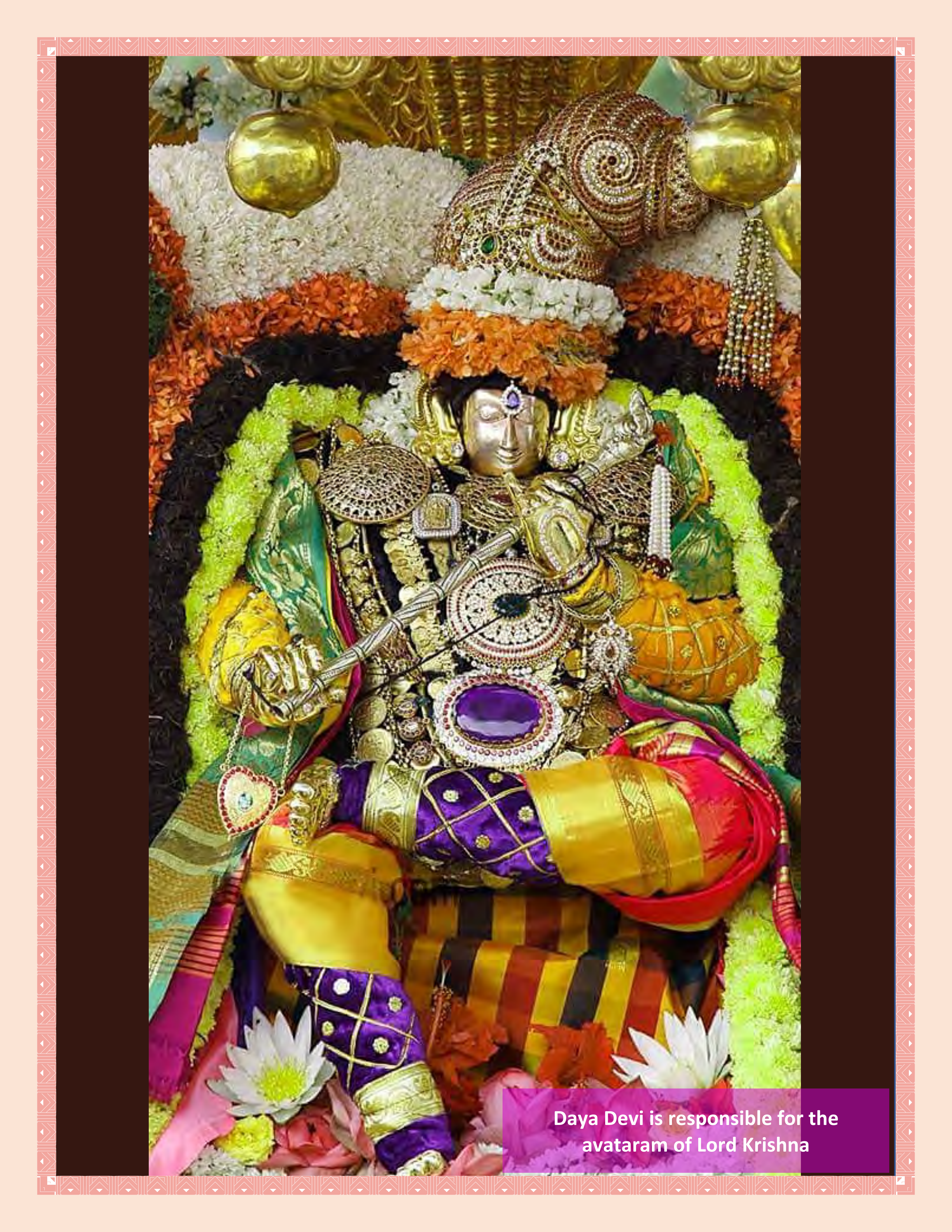
nigama saudha dIpa shriyA

Svami Desikan highlights this upakaram of Lord Krishna in this Daya Satakam verse. This is evidenced in the tribute "nirA kR^itavatI daye nigama saudha dIpa shriyA vipascit avigItayA jagati gItayA(a)ndhaM tamaH". The prima facie meaning of this tribute is that Lord Krishna ensured the well-being of the entire universe through the instruction of the Bhagavadgita. How so? This is verily a bountiful treasure due to the fact that beings steeped in the darkness of nescience were bestowed with this instruction in the manner of a beacon light that at once dispelled the darkness. It is instructive to observe the usage "nigamasaudha dIpa shriyA" in this salutation. Nigamasaudha denotes the palatial mansion of the Vedam. Saudha represents the beacon light that stands on top of this palace. In the absence of this light, the palace and its residents will be enveloped in darkness. Additionally, the path to the palace too remains dark. The inner meaning of this salutation is that by lighting this beacon, Lord Krishna ensured that residents of the

universe could access this palace and realize that their sole source of support was the Supreme Lord, residing as the King of this palace. In so doing, He illuminated the path leading to this palace and shed light on the palace itself! The Vedam existed in fear as evidenced by the tribute "bibheti alpa shrutAt vedAH" due to "mAmayaM pratAriShyati iti" coming about from incorrect propagation of their underlying tenets by those who willfully misrepresent and distort the purport of the Vedas according to their whim. In this process, they mislead seekers anxious to gain the true purport of the Vedas and thus rendered an additional disservice. Hence, the Vedam itself was in a state of fear due to these atrocities committed by fake propagators. Thus, only by bringing out the true purport of the Vedam could the Vedam itself be assured that it is in safe hands and remove the darkness enveloping the Vedic tenets due to the efforts of the fake propagators. This task of banishing the darkness enveloping the Vedam and bringing out the true purport of the Vedam, revealing the Supreme Lord glorified therein for desirous seekers thereby removing their darkness caused by ignorance is only possible on account of the Bhagavadgita instruction. This task was carried out by Lord Krishna due to Daya Devi causing Lord Srinivasa to take this incarnation. Nigamam in this context also refers to the Mahabharata, which is considered to the fifth Vedam by learned seers, in keeping with the tribute "bhArata pancamo vedaH" This is meant to convey the message that everything documented in the Vedam is contained in the Mahabharata and anything not found in the Mahabharata does not exist in the Vedam. This Bhagavadgita instruction is central to the Mahabharata as evidenced by the tribute "bhArate bhagavadgItA". This fame for the Mahabharata was brought about by Lord Srinivasa in His incarnation as Krishna, at the instigation of Daya Devi. Svami Desikan closely follows the lead of his pUrvAcAryAs and Azhvars as can be seen from the glorification "akal j~nAlattavar aRiya neRiyellAM eDutturaitta niRai j~nAttoru mUrti" in the Azhvar's TiruvAimozhi pasuram 4.8.6. Thus, Svami Desikan pays homage to Daya Devi for bringing about the Bhagavadgita instruction by causing Lord Srinivasa to incarnate as Krishna. One more aspect becomes relevant. Through the instruction of the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna dispelled the darkness of nescience for residents of the universe. This message is conveyed by Svami Desikan in present tense (vartamAna kAlam). This becomes evident from the salutation "nirA kR^itavatI daye nigama saudha dIpa shriyA vipascit avigItayA jagati gItayA(a)ndhaM tamaH" in this Daya Satakam verse. This captures the fact that even though the instruction took place at a certain time, it is very much a service that continues at present and banishes the darkness of nescience for beings of the universe, by illuminating the key tenets of the Vedam.



taM adbhutaM bAlakaM ambujekShaNaM



Daya Devi is responsible for the avataram of Lord Krishna

This comes about due to the grace of Daya Devi. It may be remembered that prior to the Bhagavadgita instruction, the relationship between Lord Krishna and Arjuna was one of friendship. However, it was entirely on account of the Bhagavadgita that the Sishya-Acharya relationship between Arjuna and Krishna was established. This is the inner meaning captured in this Daya Satakam verse. The Bhagavdgita verse (2.7) formally documenting this fact is "kArpaNya doShopahata svabhAvaH pR^icChAmi tvAM dharmasammUDhacetAH yatcChreyaH syanniscittaM brUhi tan me shiShyasteh(a)m shAdhi mAM tvAM prapannam", (I am in a state where I am unable to make the distinction between what is good and bad. I am ignorant in the ways of dharma and adharma. Therefore, please affirm my appeal of surrender to You by accepting me as Your disciple and instruct me in what would bring me glory by staying on the path of Dharma and staying away from adharma). This Sishya-Acharya relationship is explicitly brought out only in the Krishna avataram. The service rendered by Daya Devi is the establishment of the unbroken line of Acharyas starting from Lord Narayana to the present day Acharyas, who instruct sishyas in the message from the Bhagavadgita thereby dispelling the darkness caused by ignorance for these sishyas, much in the same manner as Lord Krishna instructed Arjuna. The implication here is that geniuses like Svami Alavandar and Svami Bhashyakarar through their outstanding works preserved undiluted the message of the Bhagavadgita for the benefit of mankind. Just as with the start of this decad of the Daya Satakam, where the glory of Acharyas was highlighted, Svami Desikan once again returns to this theme as he approaches the conclusion of this decad. In the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan declares "adhyAsIna tura~Nga vaktra vilasat jihvAgra simhAsanAt AcAryAt iha anyAM devatAM samadhikAM na manyAmahe" Lord Hayagriva has taken residence in the throne constituted by the tip of the tongue of Acharyas. Therefore, there is no deity greater than the Acharyas. This establishes the fact that the Supreme Lord incarnates in the form of Acharyas. Thus, Daya Devi causes the Lord to take the incarnation as an Acharyan to ensure the well-being of the universe. This was not just a one-time occurrence during the Krishna avataram but continues even in the present time. The glory of the Bhagavadgita is in its universal acceptance even by those who do not accept the authority of the Vedam. This work has been widely propagated and translated into many languages to enable the message of the Bhagavadgita to spread far and wide. Even if one may not be familiar with the meaning of the individual Bhagavadgita verses, merely hearing them recited confers a sense of calm and tranquility of mind for the listener. This is gleaned from the tribute "avigItayA jagati gItayA(a)ndhaM tamaH" (the darkness of ignorance for

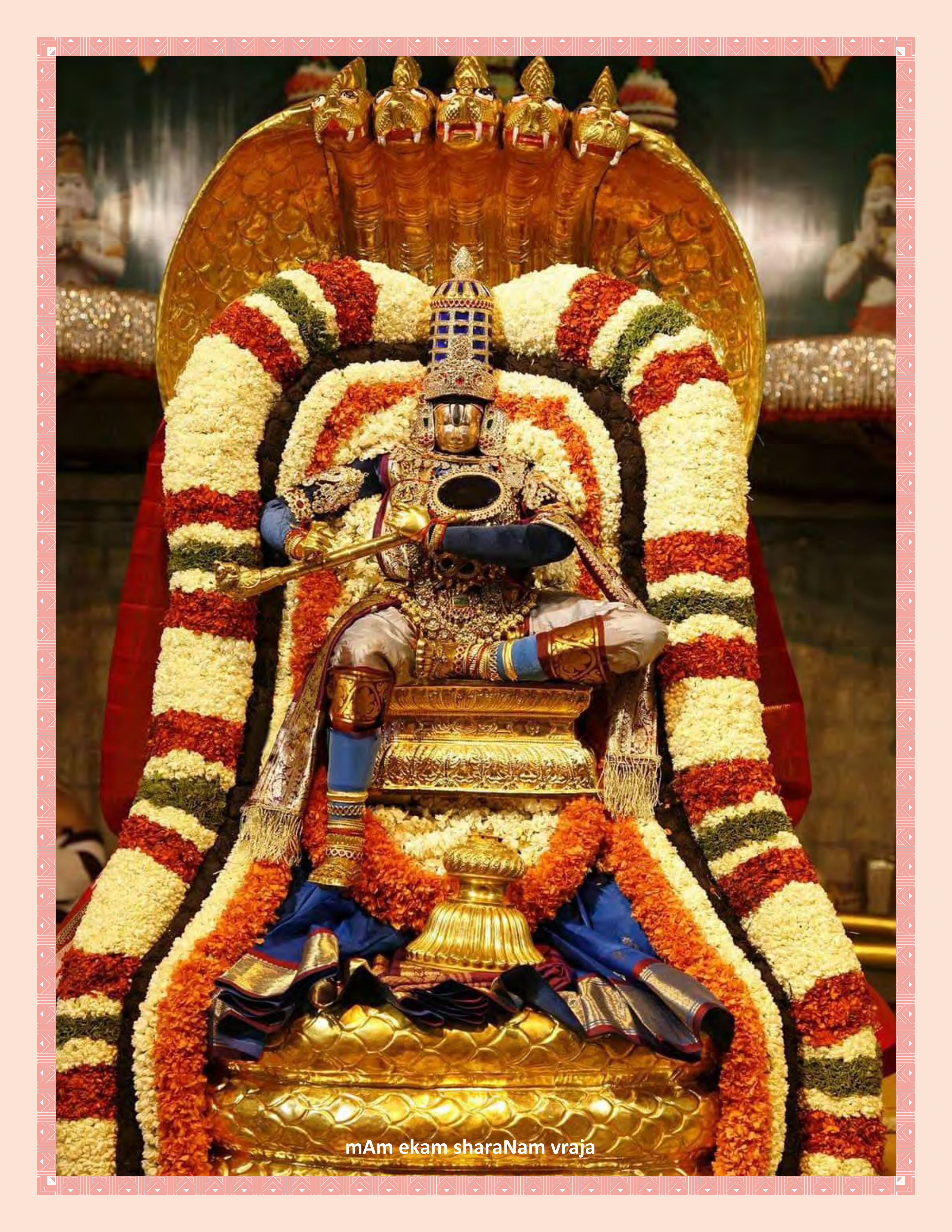


akal j~nAlattavar aRiya neRiyellAM eDutturaitta niRai j~nAttoru mUrti

residents of the universe is removed by the delivery of the Bhagavadgita messages by learned scholars well versed in the esoteric meanings underlying these messages. This comes about due to the efforts of Daya Devi, who caused Lord Srinivasa to incarnate as Lord Krishna.) Lord Narayana declares in SrImad BhagavadgIta (10.11) "teShAmeva anukampArthaM ahamaj~nAnajaM tamaH nAshayamyAtma bhavasthaH j~nAnadIpena bhAsvatA" (I dispel the darkness of ignorance for residents of this world. This is not as a return of favor for some good act carried out by these beings. Instead, it comes about entirely due to My compassion for these beings, who seek knowledge of the Atma. By lighting the lamp of the Bhagavadgita, I illumine their path and banish the darkness that envelops them.)

This sentiment is captured by Svami Desikan in the "nigama saudha dIpa shriyA" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. In fact, the Lord's service to humanity through His incarnation as Acharyas exceeds that of the upakaram of the Krishna avataram. How so? In the Krishna avataram, the Lord instructed in the lofty messages of the Bhagavadgita for posterity the most important message being contained in the charama slokam, which advocates unconditional, total surrender for the well-being of the universe. However, to implement this instruction, there needs to be a forcing function. For example, if one desires a certain benefit, the Vedam instructs the individual to perform a yagam as described in the salutation "yejeta svarga kAmaH" (perform a yajnya if you desire residence in svarga lokam). Likewise, if one were to look for the forcing function for performing Bharanyasam, the vidhi lies in the instruction "mAmekaM sharaNaM vraja" from verse 66 in Chapter 18 of the Bhagavadgita. What is the benefit arising from this performance? It lies in the instruction "sarvapApebhyo mokShayiShyAmi" (freedom from all sins and gaining moksham).

From the Mahabharata it is not known whether Arjuna adopted this instruction, performed sharaNAgati, and gained Moksham or first gained residence in svarga lokam after which he adopted this upayam and gained moksham. However, in subsequent incarnations as an Acharya, Lord Krishna/Srinivasa ensured that scores of jivans like us who have committed grave apacharams are redeemed through Bharanyasam and are granted moksham. The basis for this act is the instruction from the Charama slokam. This is entirely the doing of Daya Devi. Thus, with this verse, Svami Desikan has captured the salient features of nine principal avatarams in this decad thus far. These are avatarams that have already taken place. The forthcoming Kalki avataram is glorified in the next verse."


mAm ekam sharaNam vraja

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

Oh Daya Devi! You caused Lord Srinivasa to descend into the world as Krishna. It was in response to the pathetic cry of Bhumi Devi who was tormented by an excess of evil beings heavily laden with heinous sins. The pretext for the Krishna avataram was ostensibly to help Bhumi Devi and remove Her grief.

Effectively, the avatara gave a new sacred literature, namely the Bhagavad-Gita. It is upheld as a sacred work by scholars, indeed of all possible persuasion too. Its holiness and validity extend over the entire earth through all eras. Its aim is to teach humanity the right course of action. Figuratively, it removes the internal darkness of mind called nescience, which is truly a blindness - or inability to see. This arises from darkness. We cannot see anything in utter darkness.

Now Gita is a splendor of light kept as a lamp in a tall built palace, from which it dispels darkness all around. People can see with the aid of this lamp; even as they can get moral guidance from Gita. Thus, Oh Daya Devi! You have helped dispel mental darkness through the Bhagavad Gita.

1. Svami Desikan regards the Bhagavad Gita enunciation as the foremost contribution of the Krishna avataram surpassing all other achievements of the incarnation.

2. In many verses, Svami Desikan glorifies Lord Srinivasa as Lord Krishna.



Slokam 90

वृषाद्रिहयसादिनः प्रबलदोर्मरुत्प्रेङ्खितः

त्विषा स्फुटतटिद्गुणस्त्वदवसेकसंस्कारवान्।

करिष्यति दये कलिप्रबलघर्मनिर्मूलनः

पुनः कृतयुगाङ्कुरं भुवि कृपाणधाराधरः॥९०

vR^iShAdrihayasAdinaH prabaladormarutpre~NkhitaH

tviShA sphuTataTidguNastvadavasekasaMskAravAn|

kariShyati daye kaliprabalagharmanirmUlanaH

punaH kR^itayugA~NkuraM bhuvi kR^ipANadhArAdharaH||90



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse documents the glory of the Kalki avataram. All incarnations discussed thus far have already taken place. Here Svami Desikan glorifies a forthcoming avataram. Kalki avataram is supposed to come about in a village known as ShambaLam according to the puranic account. In that village there shall be a Brahmin named Vishnu Yashas. Lord Vishnu will incarnate as the son of this Brahmin and riding a horse will rid the world of evil. In the Krishna avataram, the Lord graced residents of the universe through the Bhagavadgita instruction. In the forthcoming Kalki avataram, Lord Narayana will destroy all the evil ones on the earth and thereby bring relief. This Daya Satakam verse which glorifies the Kalki avataram is "vR^iShAdri haya sAdinaH prabala dormarut pre~NkhitaH tviShA sphuTa taTidguNastva davaseka saMskAravAn kariShyati daye kali prabala gharma nirmUlanaH punaH kR^itayugA~NkuraM bhuvi kR^ipANa dhArAdharaH". The salutation "kariShyati daye" salutes Daya Devi, who will bring about in future the Kalki avataram for Lord Srinivasa. It may be helpful to note Svami Desikan's usage of present tense while describing the Krishna avataram and his usage of future tense for the Kalki avataram. The present tense usage for Krishna avataram was intended to convey Lord Srinivasa's anugraham that prevails for all time. Even though the incarnation took place at a certain time, the instruction of the



SrI Srinivasa takes Kalki avatAra to rid this Earth of evil.

Bhagavadgita removes the darkness of ignorance by revealing the true purport of the Vedic tenets even at the present time. While discussing the Krishna avataram in the Adhikara sangraham, Svami Desikan states "oN toDiyAL tirumakaLum tAnum Aki oru ninaivAl InRa uyir ellAm uyya vaN tuvarai nakar vAzha vacudEvaRkAi mannavaRku tEr pAkanAki ninRa taN tuLava malar mArpan tAnE conna tanittarumam tAn emakkAi tannai enRum kaNDu kaLittaDi cUDa vilakkAi ninRa kaN putaiyal viLaiyATTai kazhikkinRAnE". This is Svami Desikan's tribute to the Krishna avataram for conferring upon us the upadesam of the Bhagavadgita. It may asked if the sole purpose of the Kalki avataram is that of destruction. However, Svami Desikan notes here that while destruction of evil is necessary, the avataram sows the seeds for good that arises in the next yugam. Thus, Svami Desikan's considered position in this matter is that the purpose of the Kalki avataram is to re-establish Dharmam of the next yugam by exterminating the evil from this yugam. Again, Svami Desikan declares that it is solely to ensure the well-being of the universe that Daya Devi prevailed upon Lord Srinivasa to undertake the incarnation of Kalki.

In this avataram Lord Narayana is depicted as riding a horse and wielding a sword, which is used to ruthlessly exterminate evil minded ones steeped in sin and thereby rescue noble beings. At the end of the Kali yugam, a new cycle of creation follows. Specifically, the Kruta yugam comes about again. Svami Desikan notes that the acts in the Kalki avataram sow the seeds (so to speak) for the next Kruta yugam. The tribute "vR^iShAdri haya sAdinaH" is a descriptor for the Kalki avataram in this Daya Satakam verse. The rain-bearing cloud brings welcome relief from the intense heat and sultriness of the summer. In a like manner, Daya Devi too acts to ensure the well-being of the residents of the universe by causing Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Kalki avataram. The manner of destruction of the ills plaguing these residents and the subsequent relief that comes about are documented herein. Every year the summer is replete with intense heat, and one laments that the sultriness is unbearable. These are further supplemented by news reports of record breaking temperatures on particular days. When confronted by unceasing rain, one laments that it is possible to withstand great heat, but they are unable to tolerate the heavy rain for more than a day. However, that which is enjoyed with relish is the rainfall in the right measure at the right time, which brings relief from the sweltering summer heat. It may also be borne in mind that the rain bearing cloud is accompanied by lightning and strong winds. Sometimes, the wind can scatter the clouds resulting in a loss of the promised rainfall. However, in times when the



Surya mandala madhyavarti

(SrI Malayapaa SvAmi on Surya Prabha vahanam - Tirumala)

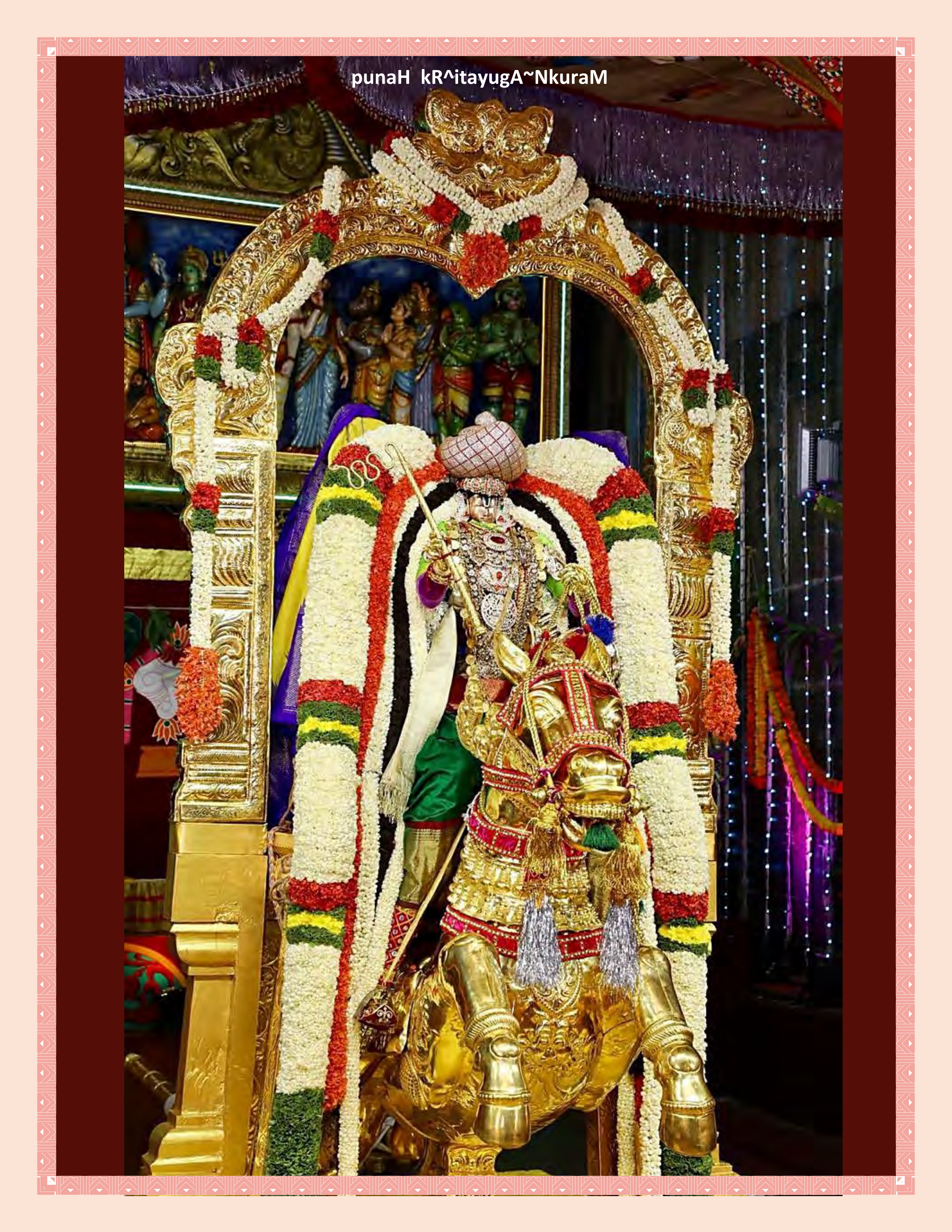
rainfall is intended for a given place, the winds ensure that that there is an accumulation of rain-bearing clouds in the region.

In the context of the Kalki avataram, Svami Desikan describes Kalki riding a horse and wielding a sword as swinging the sword. This figuratively represents the strong winds that cause the rain-bearing clouds to assemble in a given place. The sword itself is quite dazzling. The tip of the sword is like a streak of lightning. The sword itself represents the rain-bearing cloud. The sword ruthlessly annihilates sinners. This act of annihilation is verily the rainfall delivered by the cloud. Rainfall typically facilitates crop growth. In the context of the Kalki avataram, the rainfall bringing about the destruction of evil beings plants the seeds for the start of the next Kruta yugam in the creation cycle. This is captured in the salutation "vR^iShAdri haya sAdinaH prabala dormarut pre~NkhitaH" of this Daya Satakam verse. Daya Devi causes Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Kalki avataram. "kalau ve~NkaTanAyakaH" is the glorification of Lord Srinivasa in this context. During the reading of the Panchangam, there is a specific deity that is glorified in a particular period. The deity for Kruta yugam is Lord Ranganatha, while that for Dvapara yugam is Lord Varadaraja. In this context, the deity for Kali yugam is Lord Srinivasa. Thus, it becomes quite appropriate that Lord Srinivasa incarnates as Kalki at the end of the Kali yugam. This Kalki rides a white horse. Residents in the hills are frequently seen riding horses. Thus, the tribute "vR^iShAdri haya sAdinaH" depicting Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root at the Venkatam hill, as riding a white horse becomes appropriate here. In the DashAvatAra stotram, Svami Desikan describes the Kalki avataram as "kalki viShNu yashassutaH" and "nistrimsha dhArAdharaH" to document the fact that Lord Narayana will incarnate as the son of Vishnuyashas and will be bearing a sword. When the ashva vahana alankaram for Lord Srinivasa takes place during utsavam at the Venkatam hill, He is enjoyed as the one who will take the forthcoming Kalki avataram riding a horse and wielding a sword. Another point of note is that while riding the horse in the Kalki avataram, Lord Srinivasa takes on the role of an Acharyan and graces the universe. This is a uniqueness of the ashva vahana alankaram during utsavams. The inner meaning is that just as Lord Narayana in the Krishna avataram instructed us in the Bhagavadgita, He arrived along with Thayar on a horseback to provide upadesam of the Ashtakshara mantram to Tirumangai Azhvar. Specifically, this act blessed Tirumangai Azhvar with svarUpa j~nAnam (knowledge of his essential nature). The Azhvar at once accepted Lord Narayana as his Acharyan and received the instruction in the ashtakshara mantram with utmost gratitude. In fact, the Azhvar celebrates the glory of the ashtakshara mantram through his outpouring "namO



SrI Daya Devi is the dominant force for the Kalki avatara

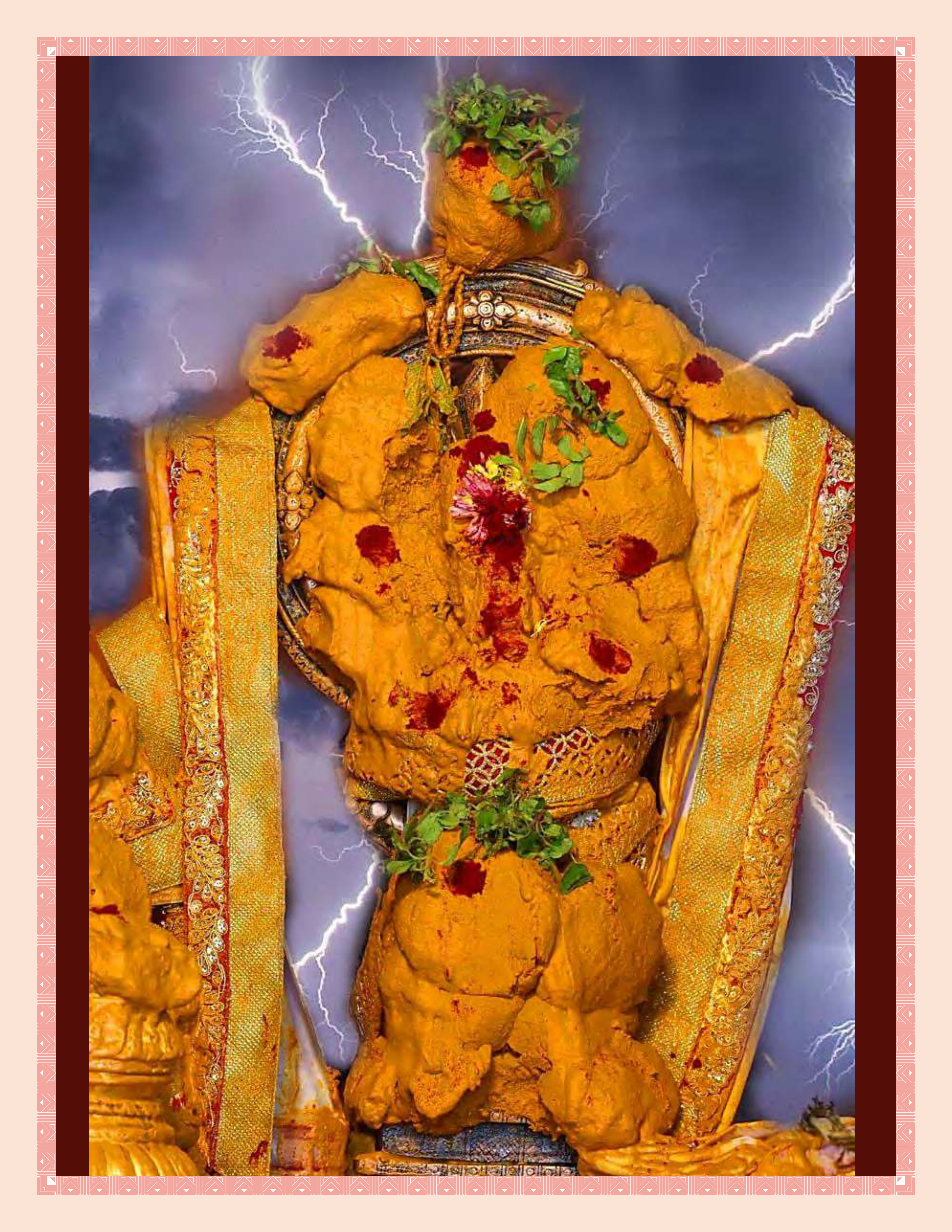
nArAyaNAya ennum nAmam" in the Periya Tirumozhi. The whip in the hand of Lord Krishna when riding the horse is intended to control the horse. Svami NammAzhvar celebrates this whip in the Tiruvaimozhi as "kollAmAkOl". This whip is used to bring about the destruction of those inimically inclined towards those who have sought refuge in Him. Thus, in the Krishna avataram, the wielding of the whip was implicit. However, in the Kalki avataram Lord Narayana explicitly uses His sword to bring about the destruction of evil beings, whose sinful actions are verily a burden on the earth and who bring about great harm to noble ones. Furthermore, de-weeding is an essential step in ensuring crop growth. In this context, the Kalki avataram carries out the de-weeding operation by ruthlessly exterminating evil ones. Thus, even the apparently gruesome act of extermination of evil in the Kalki avataram is act of anugraham. The tribute "prabala dormarut pre~NkhitaH" from this Daya Satakam verse describes the beauty of the powerful arm of Lord Srinivasa, which is used to wield the sword. The swinging of His arm causes a breeze. In the Rama avataram, the shoulder of the Lord is described as "tOL kaNDAr tOLE kaNDAr tAL kaNDAr tALE kaNDAr" in the Kamba Ramayanam. (Those beholding the shoulder of the Lord focus on the shoulder alone and those that behold the feet of Lord Rama remain engrossed in the anubhavam of the feet). The beauty of Lord Varadaraja's shoulder is enjoyed in the Ramanusa NURRantAti Pasuram "ANDukaL nAL tinkaLAi nikazh kAlamellAm manamE INDu pal yOnikaL tORuzhalvOm inROr eN inRiyE kAN taku tOL aNNai ten attiyUrar kazhal iNai kIzh pUNDa anpALan irAmAnucanai poruntinamE" The shoulder of Bhagavan Varadaraja is mesmerizingly beautiful. Although His entire body is replete with beauty, the shoulders are distinctive. Each deity has a unique beauty. For example in the mangalasasanam for Lord Ranganatha, Svami Desikan uses the tribute "svAgatodhAranetram". (The beauty of Lord Ranganatha's eyes is captivating and is instructing us in the manner of "please come"). Similarly, when extolling Lord Devanayaka of Triuvahindhrapuram in Devanayaka PancAshat, Svami Desikan renders the tribute "ArdrIbhavAmyamR^ita varSha nibhairapA~NgaiH" (The welcoming eyes of Devanayaka seem to enquire if "all is well".) In the context of Lord Varadaraja, Tiruvaranagathamudhanar enjoys the bhuja parAkramam. In this Daya Satakam verse, the swinging of the shoulder of Kalki is captured through the tribute "vR^iShAdri haya sAdinaH prabala dormarut pre~NkhitaH" resulting in a refreshing breeze. The glorification "tviShA sphuTa taTidguNastva davaseka saMskAravAn" documents the fact that the sword of Kalki is quite dazzling. The tip of the sword constitutes the lightning that accompanies the wind and the rain-bearing cloud. Svami Desikan uses the simile that in this case, the lightning is like a stringed thread. The tribute "bhuvi kR^ipANa dhArAdharaH"

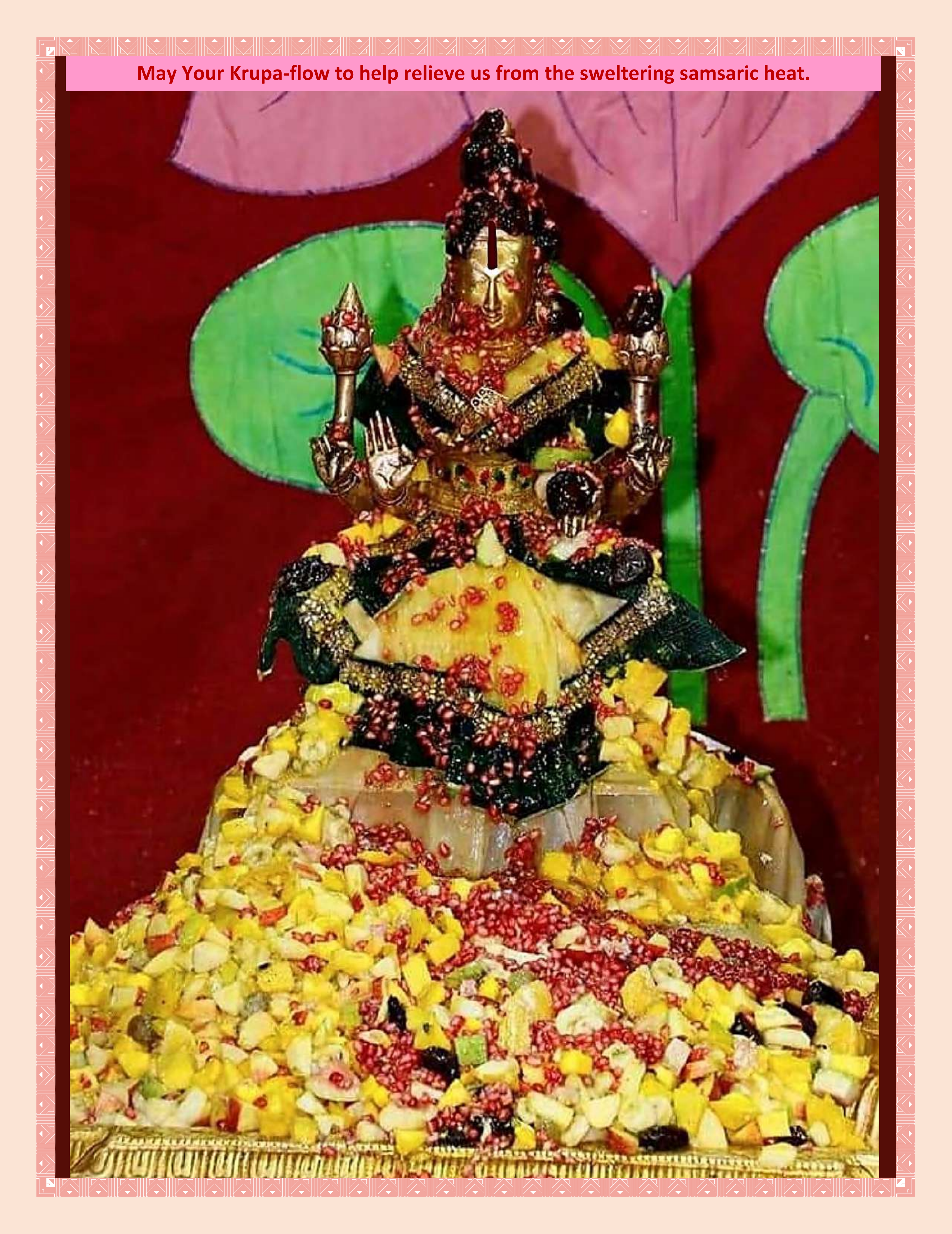

punaH kR^itayugA~NkuraM



All the avatarams of Lord Narayana including those as Acharyas are glorified as an act of Daya Devi

of this Daya Satakam verse denotes the fact that the wielding of the sword is an act initiated by Daya Devi. Therefore, it can only result in anugraham. Thus, the seemingly gruesome act of destruction of evil is also an act of compassion. It must be noted that "kR^ipANa" denotes the sword of Kalki. What good can come about from wielding this sword? Svami Desikan answers this through the salutation "kali prabala gharma nirmUlanaH" (The sword wipes out the extremely strong heat caused on account of atrocities arising from Kali). Kaliyugam is detested for the outrageously atrocious acts that take place. However, Kaliyugam has viseshams too. For example, even a tiny fraction of the intense karmas and tapas undertaken in the Kruta yugam yields comparable benefit in the Kali yugam. The fruits gained through the performance of arduous yagams and the like in Kruta yugam can be had in Kali yugam by mere nama sankeertanam (reciting the names of Lord Narayana). These facts have been documented in the puraNas. Why then is the Kali yugam frowned upon in the same puraNas? It is due to the fact that Kali yugam offers fertile breeding ground for those deviating from the path of dharma and engaging in adharma. This results in people taking to the path of adharma in large numbers. As a consequence, good people in Kali yugam are subject to untold suffering. This is verily like the scorching summer heat. This is captured in the tribute "kali prabala gharma nirmUlanaH" of this Daya Satakam verse. For example, the heat in the months of Kanya and Thula may be equivalent to the heat in the months of Panguni and Chaithra. However, the heat from the latter months becomes unbearable. The scorching heat arising on account of Kali is described in terms of this example. The reason for being able to tolerate the heat in the months of Kanya and Thula is due to the fact that the daytime heat is accompanied by rainfall at night, which cools things down. However, there is no such relief in the months of Panguni and Chaithra. The scorching heat produced by Kali yugam is similar in this respect to the heat in the months of Panguni and Chaithra, where there is no relief. This heat is exterminated by the breeze arising from "bhuvi kR^ipANa dhArAdharaH" (the wielding of the sword by Kalki). This in turn is the pleasant rainfall, which plants the seeds for Kruta yugam in the next creation cycle as documented in the tribute "punaH kR^itayugA~NkuraM" of this Daya Satakam verse. This will be brought about in future by Daya Devi as documented in the salutation "kariShyati daye" of this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, in this decad Svami Desikan highlights the role of Daya Devi in causing Lord Srinivasa to undertake numerous incarnations starting from the archa form and going through the ten principal avatarams. In the opening verse of this decad, Svami Desikan glorifies the act of Daya Devi in blessing us with the Archa avataram taken by Lord Srinivasa,




May Your Krupa-flow to help relieve us from the sweltering samsaric heat.

which destroys the ills plaguing us on account of Kali yugam. Specifically in this verse, Svami Desikan glorifies Lord Srinivasa, who is in the form of the archa mUrtis at various Divya Desams, as the rain-bearing cloud that brings relief from the sweltering heat of Kali yugam brought about by Daya Devi. In the concluding verse too, Svami Desikan maintains the same theme while offering his tribute to Daya Devi for causing Lord Srinivasa to undertake the Kalki avataram to rid us of the unbearable heat from kali yugam. In between all the avatarams of Lord Narayana including those as Acharyas are glorified as an act of Daya Devi. With the prayerful thoughts of invoking the grace of Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa, we conclude our exposition of this decad."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharıar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa takes the forthcoming avataram of Kalki at the end of the Kali age, when evil in highly ripened form torments all people, particularly good people, like a hot sweltering summer. People long for rainfall at this time. You inspire the Lord. He rides a horse, gets down from the hill and swings into action. He sports a sword of steel, that has been sharpened and polished. This is ready for prompt slaying with the Daya waters. When the Lord swings into action waving the sword, swiftly, a gust of wind is generated. The waving of the sharp, brilliant sword creates an imagery of lightning. All fit in well. The sword in this instance is the rain-bearing cloud with the accompaniment of wind, water, and lightning. The sword destroys bad elements. It is veritably a cloud that showers cool water that would help sprouting of a new age (Kruta yugam) with new beings, extremely good too. We pray for Your Krupa-flow to help relieve us from the sweltering summer heat.

1. Roopaka figure of speech; Word pun; perfect analogy between the sword action and the rain-bearing cloud, all make for a delectable verse.

2. Daya is the dominant force for this avataram too."







SvAmi NigamAnta MahAdeSikan's

Dayaa Satakam

(SlokaH 91– 100)

Translated into English by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy



Sri:



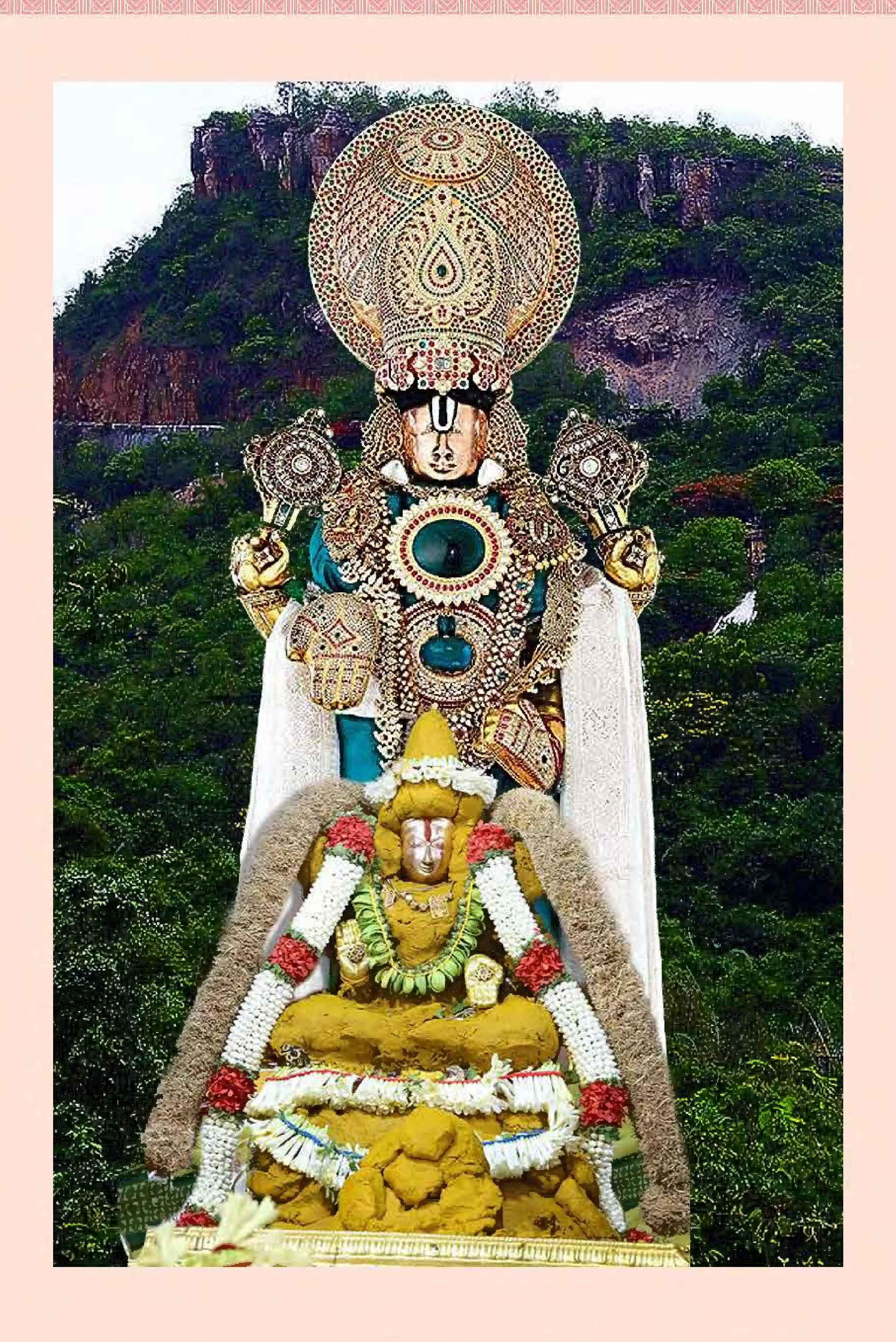
SvAmi Nigamanta MahaDesikan's

DAYAA SATAKAM

A

Tribute by

Ammangi Thandalam Muralidhar Rangaswamy





SrImad venkaTanAthArya tvadIya caraNadvayam|

bhavatvatra paratrApi madIyam SaraNam sadaa||

Srimate NigamAnta MahadesikAya namaH||

Srimate Gopaladesika MahadesikAya namaH||



Slokam 91

विश्वोपकारमिति नाम सदा दुहानाम्

अद्यापि देवि भवतीमवधीरयन्तम् ।

नाथे निवेशय वृषाद्रिपतेर्दये त्वं

न्यस्त स्व रक्षण भरं त्वयि मां त्वयैव ॥ ९१ ॥

vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm

adyApi devi bhavatImavadhIrayantam|

nAthe niveshaya vR^iShAdri paterdaye tvaM

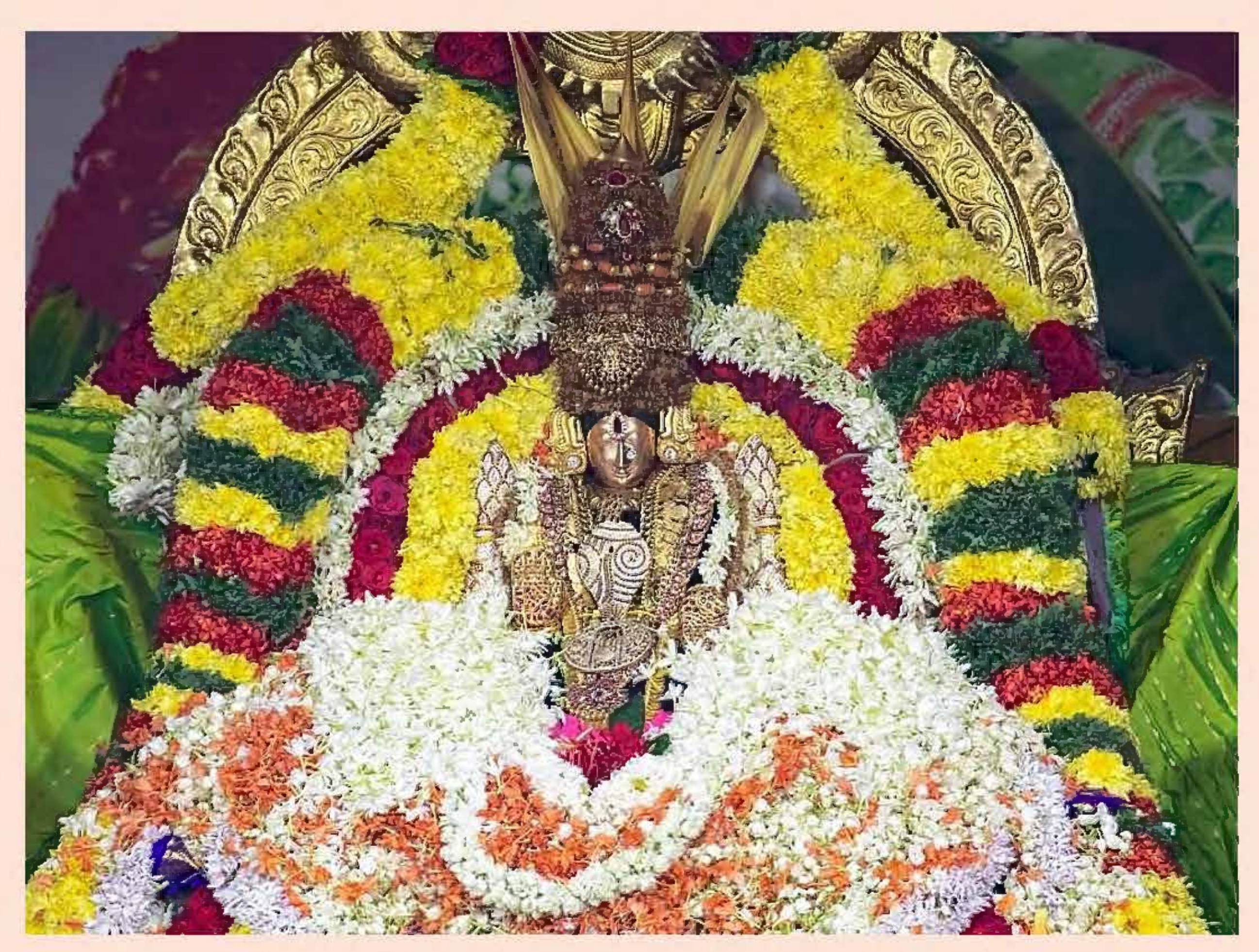
nyasta sva rakShaNa bharaM tvayi mAM tvayaiva||91



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We commence the exposition of Verse 91 corresponding to the tenth decad of the Daya Satakam. This decad is uniquely captivating, not to imply that the other decads are any less. This decad extols Daya Devi again in the context of Her role for those who have performed Bharanyasam and are anxious for Brahma Ananda anubhavam. The first decad contained a salutation to the sacred Venkatam hill, followed by tributes to Azhvar, Nityasuris, Maharishis such as Parashara, Sri Devi, Bhumi Devi, and Neela Devi, and concluded with Svami Desikan's position of delivering a glorification of Daya Devi in the midst of their grand gathering. Svami Desikan then commences his formal tribute to Daya Devi in verse 11 and documents Her numerous upakarams. As a matter of fact, even adiyen's upanyasam on the Daya Satakam at the present time and the gathering of several listeners to hear the explanation of the individual verses is due to the grace of Daya Devi. Svami Desikan has exposited that Daya Devi is the cause for Lord Narayana to undertake the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the Universe. During the time of Mahapralayam, all sentient beings existed in an inert state without any name or form as part of Lord Narayana's body. Greatly moved by their plight and motivated by the fact that if they are bestowed with a body and sense organs to experience pain and pleasure, they may perhaps put this to good use and seek out Lord Narayana, Daya Devi implores that they be given another opportunity

for redemption. Not only that, Daya Devi goes the extra step in blessing these beings with the Sastras so that they can lead their lives in a proper manner.



Daya Devi is the cause for Lord Narayana to undertake the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the Universe.

Next, even if we are consigned to take numerous births on account of our karma, Lord Narayana out of His Sankalpam accompanies us in these births with the sole aim of redeeming us. This comes about due to the efforts of Daya Devi. The impediment for attaining the benevolent Lord Narayana, who is so kindly disposed, is our sin pile. This seems to be an uphill battle for Lord Narayana, who is quite exhausted by this task. However, Daya Devi comes to the Lord's rescue by serving as His protective armour so to speak, thereby instantly ensuring the Lord's victory. For hapless beings struggling in the waters of the samsaric ocean, Daya Devi serves as the raft to cross over, paving the way for their redemption. The boatmen steering this "Daya Devi-boat" are Acharyas, who are well versed in artha panchakam. Without the boat of Daya Devi and the capable boatmen (Acharyas),

there is literally no way for these hapless beings to cross the samsaric ocean. It is unmistakably Daya Devi, who offers this way of redemption. Lord Narayana is known for dispensing justice in accordance with one's karma as evidenced by the Goda stuti tribute,"karmAnubandhi phaladAnaratasya bhartuH." Going by this dictum, if the Lord were to mete out consequences for the mountainous sin-pile of errant baddha jivans, time itself would run out for enduring even a small fraction of the sin-pile. Thus, it would be pointless to engage in this task. This position is brought to the forefront by convincing arguments advanced by Daya Devi using the authority of the Sastras, thus paving the way for the baddha jivans' redemption. Svami Desikan has specifically noted that Daya Devi transforms the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana into one of anugraham. To Daya Devi of such loftiness, Svami Desikan performs his formal sharaNAgati in verse 60 and in subsequent verses further documents the numerous acts of help rendered by Daya Devi.



Without any consideration of high or low, Daya Devi ensures that all beings are uniformly graced by Lord Narayana. Thus, She ensures that all beings become privy to the grace of Lord Narayana. In the preceding decad Svami Desikan highlighted the role of Daya Devi in bringing about the avatarams of Lord Narayana starting from Archa form to His ten principal avatarams and ensuring that the entire Universe was privy to His grace during these avatarams. In each of the avatarams Lord Narayana showered His grace in a unique manner. For example, in Verse 82 of Daya Satakam, the tribute "samIkShaNa vicintana prabhrutibhiH svayaM tAdrushaiH" (Lord Narayana ensures the protection of beings of the Universe either through His contemplation or by merely looking at them through His eyes.) Additionally, the Lord's acts of compassion were not restricted to the time of His avataram or confined only to those who were fortunate to be born at the time of His incarnation. Instead through the construction of the great bridge, Lord Rama ensured that a one-time sighting of the bridge results in the destruction of the most

heinous sins for all beings at all times including the present. The cause of these extraordinary acts on the part of Lord Narayana is undoubtedly Daya Devi as eloquently captured in the verses of the previous decad.



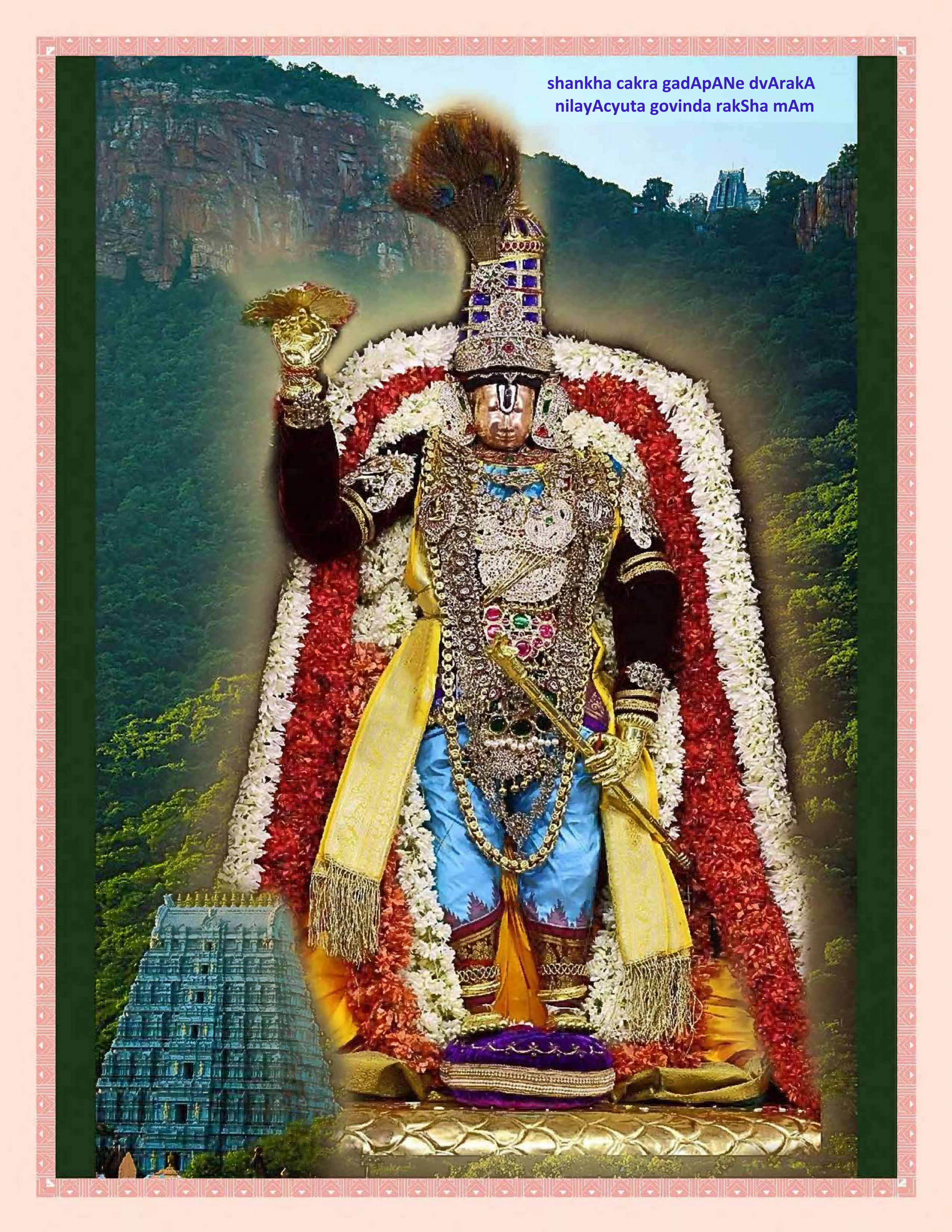
mAtAdevi tvamasi

Thus, these ninety verses constitute a glowing tribute to Daya Devi, where not a single slokam is inappropriate or mischaracterizes the act of Daya Devi. Daya

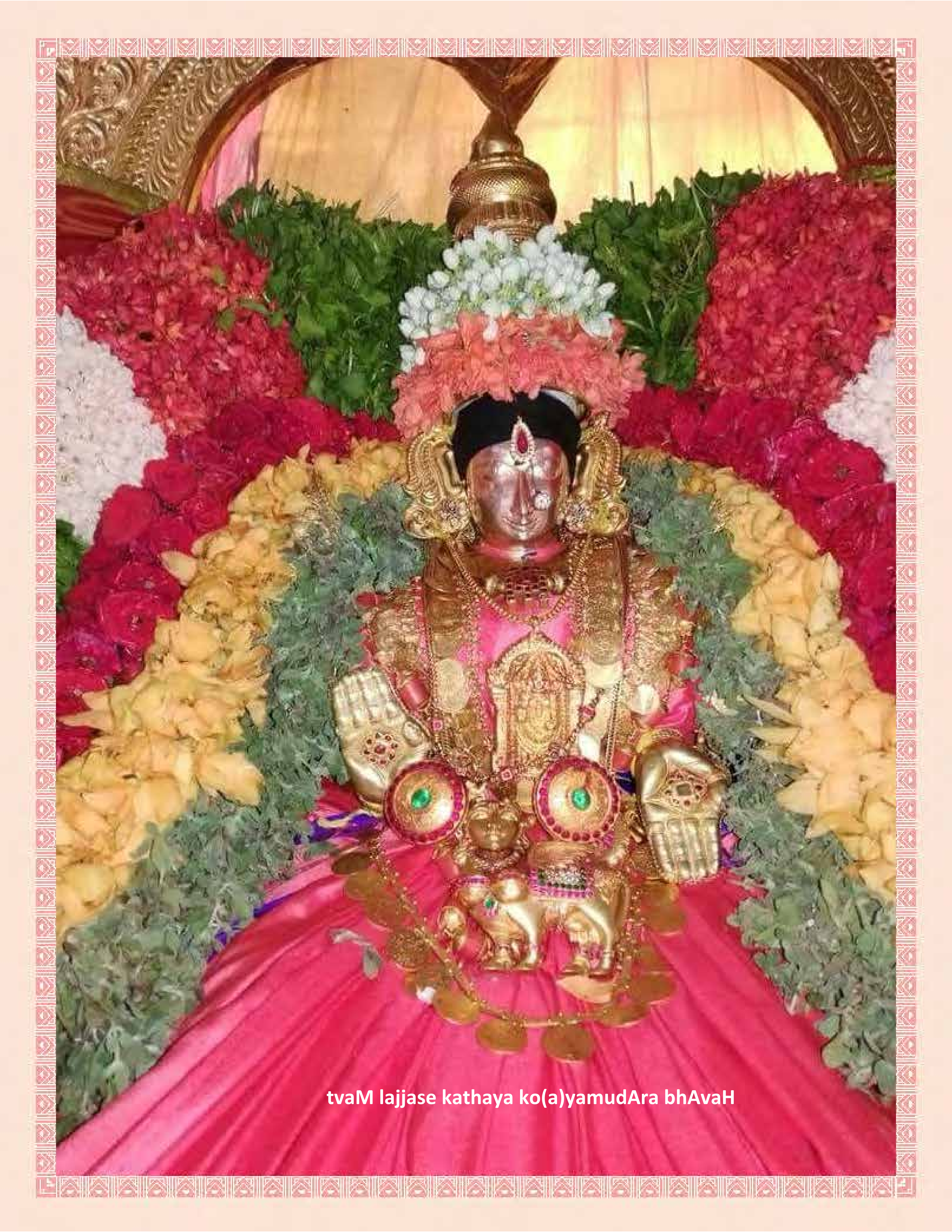
Devi is delighted with this flow of verses from Svami Desikan and resolves to ask Svami what he desires. This is something that has occurred elsewhere when Svami Desikan submitted his tribute to Thayar for example in the Sri Stuti. The evidence in support of this position can be found in the salutation “yogArambha tvarita manaso yuShmadaikAntya yuktaM dharmaM prAptuM prathamamihaye dhArayante dhanayAm” (Please ask for whatever you want. If it is money that you desire hold your vastram open, there shall be a copious shower of gold coins) and in the salutation “ChatracChAya subhagashirasashcAmarasmerapArshvAH shlAghA shabdaH shravaNamuditAH sragviNaH sancaranti” (If it is name and fame that you desire where you are welcomed by fan bearers and others carrying royal paraphernalia of umbrella and the like accompanied by panegyrists rendering your praise, I stand ready to grant this.) These tributes in fact are a reflection of the joy that Thayar begets when Svami Desikan himself renders them as part of his stotrams. In Kanchipuram, Navaratri utsavam is celebrated around the time of Svami Desikan’s Tirunakshatram (Sravanam in Kanya Masam). Typically, Svami Desikan’s Tirunakshatram coincides with the end of the Navaratri Utsavam. This is usually celebrated in a grand manner with aradhanam, parayanam, and Satrumurai. During this time the Utsava Dampatis in Kanchipuram can be seen at the Kannadi arai Abhisheka Mantapam. They are adorned with all sorts of beautiful ornaments and very slowly proceed towards the Sannadhi of Kovil Desikan, where Maryadai (all honors) is offered to Svami Desikan. After this, they move towards the nURRukkAl mantapam, where they receive additional tiruvaradhanams and upacharams. This also coincides with the Desika Utsavam celebrated in a beautiful manner at ThUppul, the avatara sthalam of Svami Desikan. During this time, Svami Desikan arrives on a vahanam, with all royal paraphernalia from ThUppul in front of the Divya Dampatis of Kanchipuram. The Divya Dampatis of Kanchipuram enjoy from the abhisheka mantapam all the honors bestowed upon their favorite son, Svami Desikan, verily in the manner of parents enjoying the laurels conferred upon their children. Thus, those who have true Bhakti towards Perundevi Thayar are graced in the manner outlined in Svami Desikan’s Sri Stuti tribute “ChatracChAya subhagashirasashcAmarasmerapArshvAH shlAghA shabdaH shravaNamuditAH sragviNaH sancaranti.” This is actually enacted in real time during the utsavam for Svami Desikan. In a like manner, in the context of the Daya Satakam, Daya Devi is supremely pleased with Svami Desikan’s majestic tribute. In another place in the Sri Stuti, Svami Desikan submits the appeal to Perundevi Thayar “sAnuprAsa prakaTita dayaiH sAndravAtsalyadigdhaiH ambasnigdhairamR^ita laharI labdhasabrahmacaryaiH gharme tApatrayaviracite gADa taptaM kShaNaM mAm

AkincanyaglapitamanaghairArdrayethAH kaTAkShaiH". Here Svami Desikan desires the nectarine elixir like eye-glances of Mahalakshmi Thayar to gain relief from the intense summer heat arising out of the three kinds of tapams accompanying all samsaric association, which verily scorches his entire body. In response to this appeal, Svami Desikan not only gains the eye-glances of Thayar, but also of Lord Varadaraja (Narayana). Delighted by this good fortune coming his way Svami Desikan further submits the salutation "mAtAdevi tvamasi bhagavAn vAsudevaH pitAme jAtaH so(a)haM janani yuvayorekalakShyaM dayAyAH datto yuShmatparijanatayA deshikairapyatastvam" (It is entirely Your Daya, Oh Mother that this benefit of receiving the compassionate eye-glances of You and Lord Varadaraja has come my way! You are my mother and Lord Vasudeva is my father. Due to Your limitless compassion, it appears that my Acharyas have given me away by way of dattam to render ceaseless kaimkaryam for both of You. Swami Desikan discerns a beautiful smile on the face of Thayar which seems to suggest that "having received this benefit do you desire anything more?".

In a like manner, in the context of the Daya Satakam, Daya Devi is supremely pleased with Svami Desikan's majestic tribute. Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan: "Due to association with Sadacharyas, you have performed sharaNAgati. As a consequence, your moksham is assured. Furthermore, due to your disposition, you have no use for aihika/kamyartha benefits. What then do you desire, Svami?" Svami Desikan lived a life of Uncha vrutthi. One day when he did his rounds to collect alms for his daily neivedyam for his Aradhana murti, someone out of extreme affection for Svami mixed a few gold coins along with the rice. Svami Desikan took the offering home and then saw the gold coins. He remarked to his wife that the daily offering of rice was contaminated by worms that needed to be cleared. Upon clearing the gold coins with a string, Svami Desikan used the rice for preparation of neivedyam offering for his Aradhana murti. This is eloquent testimony to Svami Desikan's vairagyam. Therefore, in reply to Daya Devi's question, Svami Desikan will be loath to seeking material benefits. Due to Svami Desikan's sharaNAgati to Daya Devi in verse 60 of the Daya Satakam "mR^idu hR^idaye daye mR^iditakAmahite mahite dhR^itavibudhe budheShu vitatAtmadhure madhure vR^iShagirisArvabhaumadayite mayite mahatIM bhavukanidhe nidhehi bhavamUlaharAM laharIm" he is assured of Moksham. What then remains by way of anugraham for Svami Desikan from Daya Devi? She Herself is at a loss to know what this is. Therefore, Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan "Svami what is it that you desire? Due to your tribute to Me, I am eternally indebted to you - nitya ruNavati." This is very much in the same spirit of Lord Krishna's

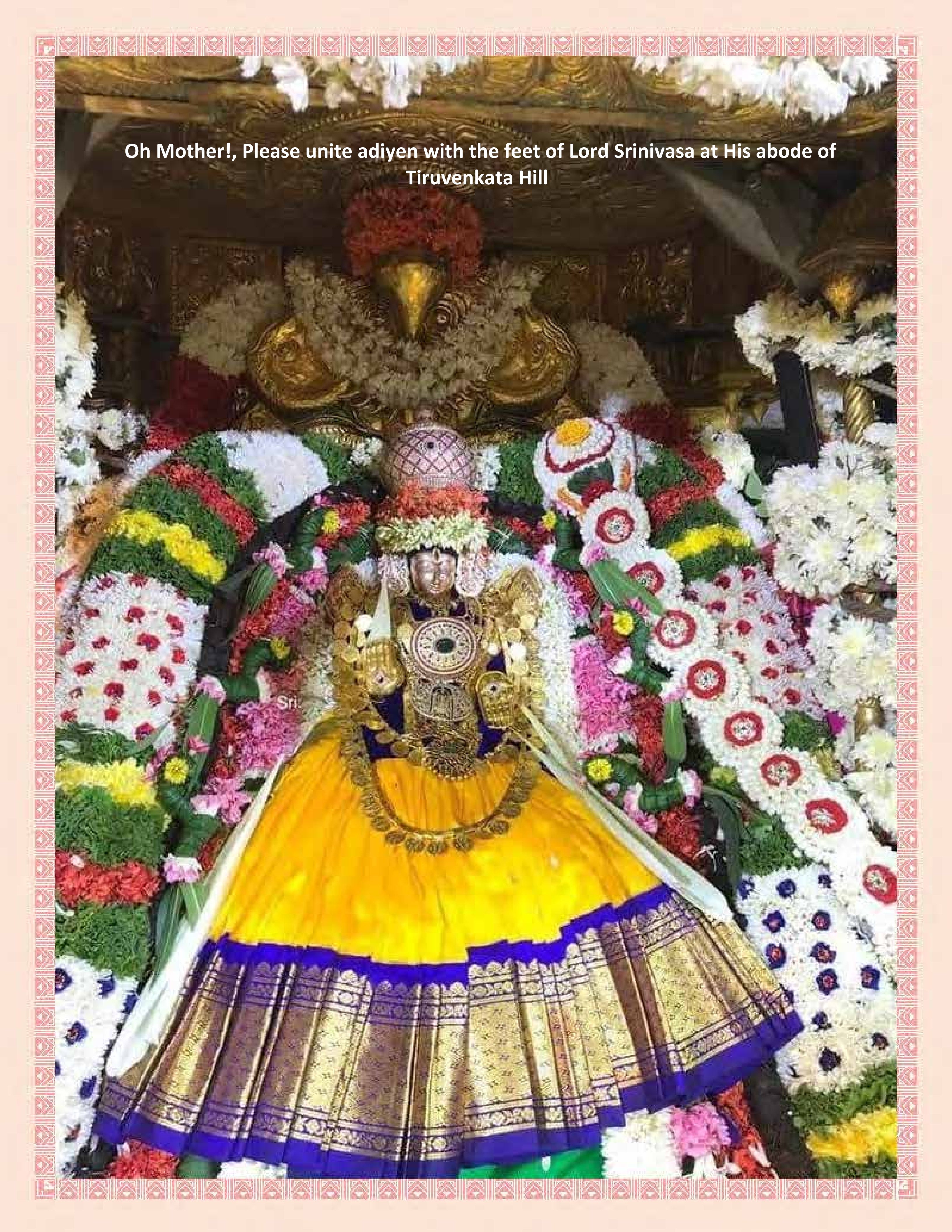

shankha cakra gadApANe dvArakA
nilayAcyuta govinda rakSha mAm

expression of being indebted to Draupadi. While being disrobed in the Kaurava court, Draupadi submitted her appeal through the prayer "shankha cakra gadApANe dvArakA nilayAcyuta govinda puNDarIkAkSha rakSha mAM sharaNAgatAm." Lord Krishna ensured a never-ending supply of robes thereby guarding Draupadi's honor. However, Lord Krishna later mentioned that this was an action in response to the Govinda namam alone and that He has a debt that remains on account of the other namams submitted in Draupadi's appeal. This is literally in the manner of merely paying the interest on the debt while a huge principal amount needs to be paid up to be completely discharged from the debt. Daya Devi's sentiment here is very much in the same spirit as Lord Krishna's declaration. This slokam is a sambhAShaNam (tete-e-tete) between Daya Devi and Svami Desikan. For most people attaining the lotus feet of Lord Narayana upon gaining moksham and reaching Sri Vaikuntam is the ultimate puruShArtham. However for Svami Desikan, attaining the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill is itself the greatest puruShArtham. Therefore, Svami Desikan submits the appeal to Daya Devi in this verse that She should ensure that he is united with the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa. This verse is "vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm adyApi devi bhavatImavadhIrayantam nAthe niveshaya vR^iShAdri paterdaye tvaM nyasta sva rakShaNa bharaM tvayi mAM tvayaiva" (Oh Venerable Mother Daya Devi! Adiyen has submitted his glorification of You in the prior verses comprising nine decads and documented Your monumental acts of help to the universe. You are very much like the Divine Cow Kamadhenu, that grants the wishes of all her seekers. In this context the usage "duhAnAm" denotes the act of milking the cow. It is furthermore employed in present tense. Although the Daya Satakam was composed more than 700 years ago and Svami Desikan was the recipient of Daya Devi's anugraham, the usage of present tense in this verse is eloquent testimony to the fact that Daya Devi's anugraham exists even at the present time. This is intended to assure those who adopt this stotram for daily recital as well as those who hear the exposition of the meanings underlying the individual verses, that they definitely become privy to the grace of Daya Devi. The tribute "vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm" is meant to convey the enormous upakaram of Daya Devi in endowing us with this body and providing us with the Sastrams so that we lead our lives properly, causing us to seek Acharya sambandham on account of which Bharanyasam is performed and the way for our redemption is paved. This is in the manner of the salutation "mArmElE kaivaittu urankuvAr pOlE" from Srimad RahasyatrayasAram. (One who has performed sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana is assured of moksham due to the grace of Daya Devi.

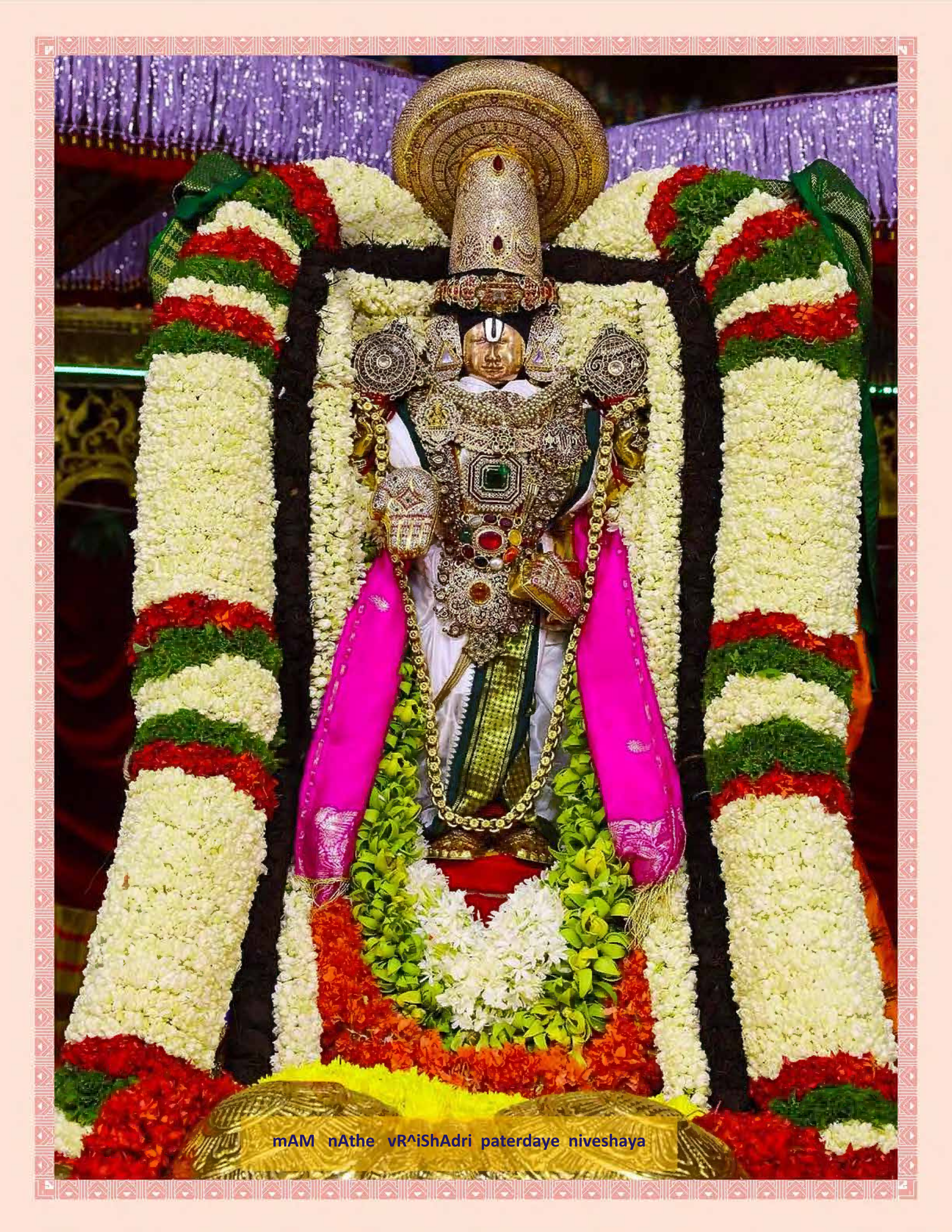

tvaM lajjase kathaya ko(a)yamudAra bhAvaH



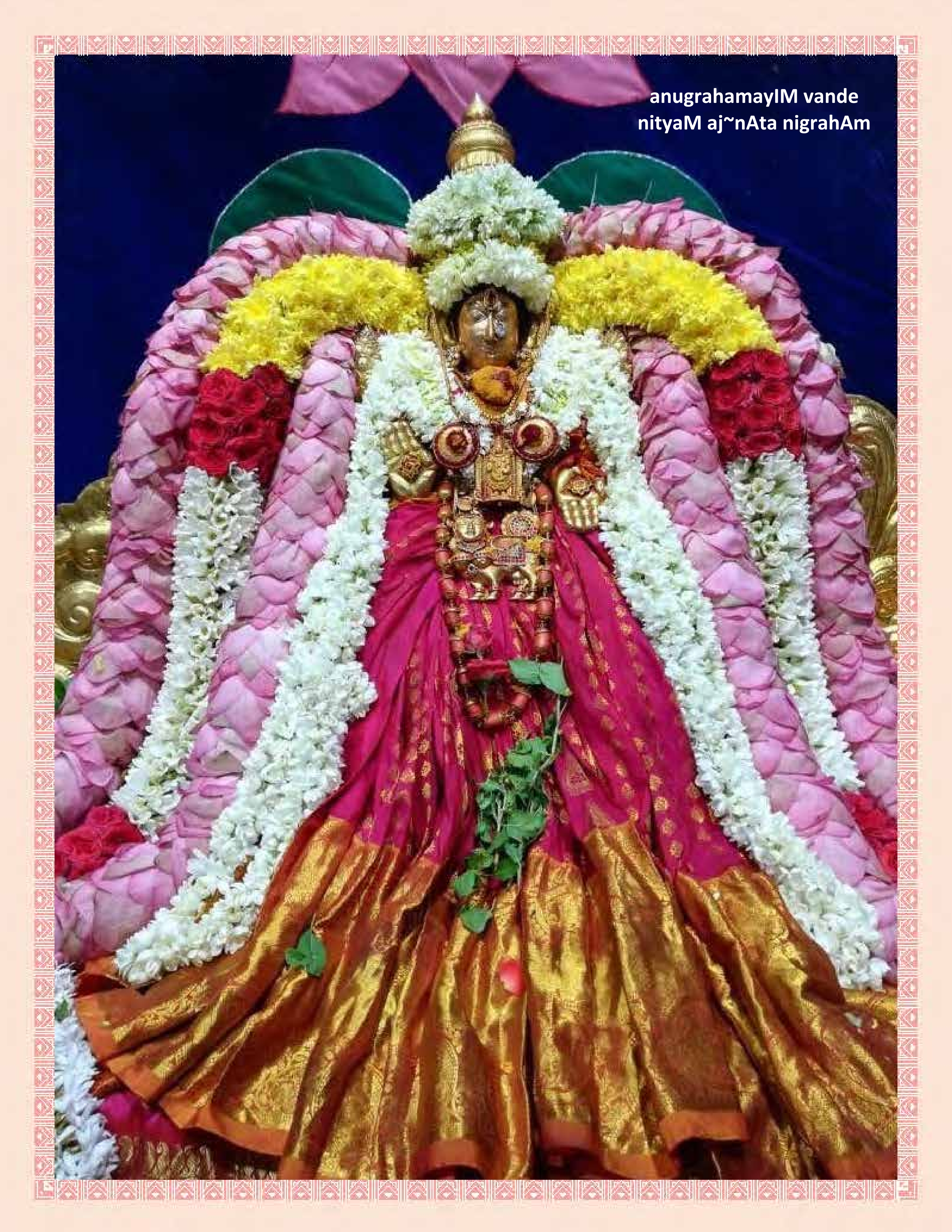
As a result, his state is one of absolute fearlessness in the manner of one resting peacefully placing his hand on his heart.) This is not meant for a select few individuals. Instead, it is universal and applicable to all. In this context, the “vishvopakAram” rendered by Daya Devi to all beings of the Universe, is to help them understand that the benefits of aihikam (material benefits) and amuShmikam (residence in svarga lokam, the positions of Indra, Rudra, and Brahma) are destructible and hence should be discarded in favor of the lasting and permanent parama puruShArtham of mokSham, resulting in eternal kaimkaryam for the Divya Dampatis. Her upakaram for all beings of the Universe, manifests in several ways, finally almost binding them and throwing them at the feet of Lord Srinivasa in the manner of a convict being brought before a judge by force. When one examines the actions of this jivan, it is replete with sins in the form of a mountainous accumulation over a long time. Several witnesses attest to the acts of transgression on the part of the jivan. The omniscient Lord Narayana needs no witnesses to testify since He is fully aware of the acts committed by the jivan. He asks the jivan whether the allegations are true. With no other recourse left, the jivan enters a guilty plea. So grave are the transgressions of the jivan that the jivan would be consigned to narakams for an inordinately long period. Daya Devi comes to the rescue of the jivan in the manner of a female attorney, representing the jivan in the court of Lord Narayana. She advances compelling arguments rooted in the Sastras, which no doubt recommend punishment for sins committed. However, the same Sastras declare that if the jivan has performed sharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Narayana, the sins no matter how grave are no bar for attaining moksham. He definitely needs to be graced. Daya Devi highlights this fact to Lord Narayana. Thus single-handedly, Daya Devi transforms the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana into one of anugraham for the jivan. This is an act of supreme compassion on the


Oh Mother!, Please unite adiyen with the feet of Lord Srinivasa at His abode of Tiruvenkata Hill

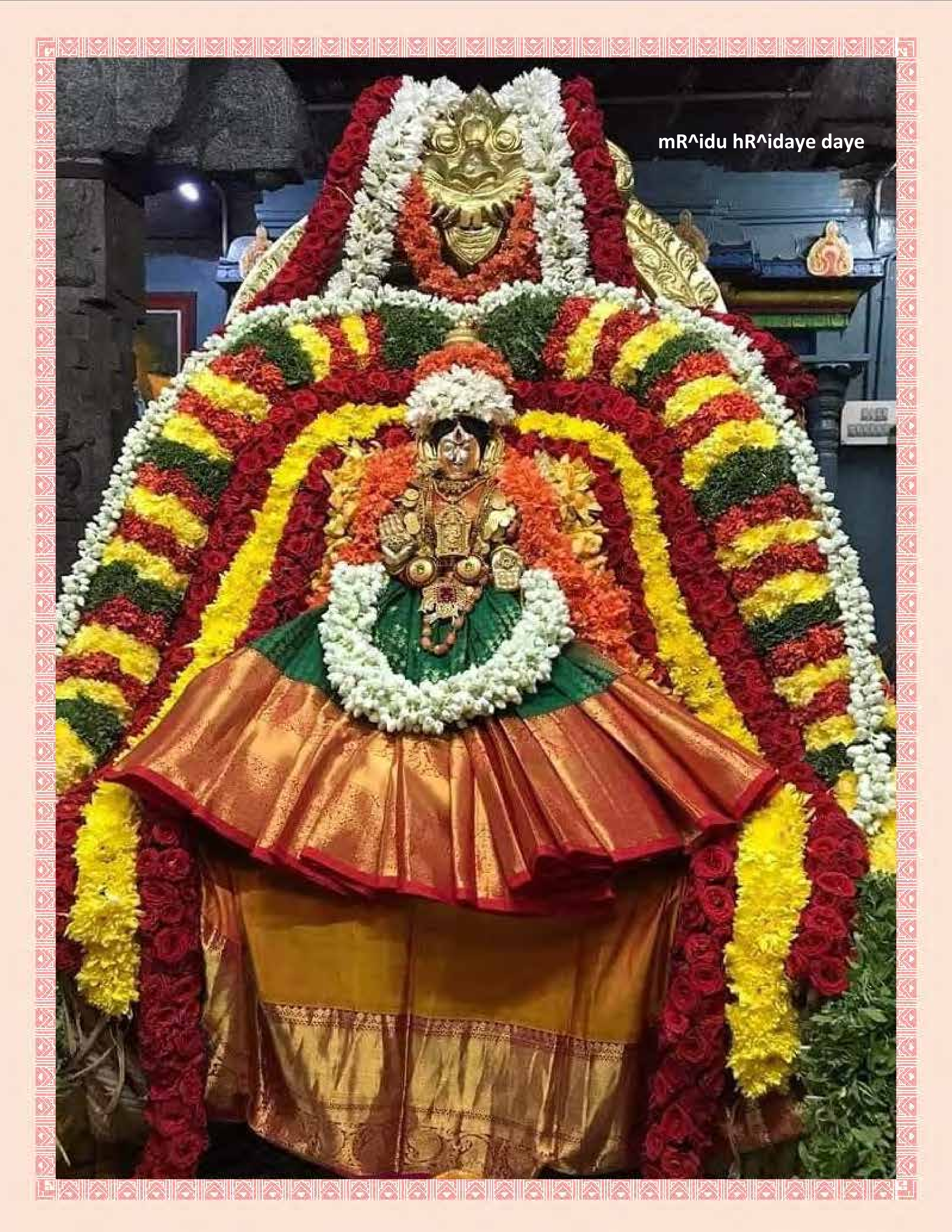
part of Daya Devi. The numerous ways in which Daya Devi has rendered help for beings of the universe is thus documented in the tribute "vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm" of this Daya Satakam verse. The depiction of the numerous upakarams of Daya Devi is in terms of the churning of the divine cow Kamadhenu, which yields an unending supply of milk for all. In fact the Kamadhenu cow was the bone of contention between Vishvamitra and Vasishta. The former was a king, who once happened to visit the hermitage of sage Vasishta with his large retinue. Sage vasishta welcomed him and arranged for a grand feast with the help of Kamadhenu, the divine cow. In the same manner of the Kamadhenu cow feeding the large retinue of Vishvamitra, Daya Devi renders help to all beings of the universe. It is not restricted to one or two but is available endlessly to however many beings of the Universe that resort to Daya Devi. For example, if one goes to a garment store, the owner when in a good mood may offer a few vastrams for free. A milk vendor may similarly hand out a few freebies in the form of milk cartons. So too the owner of a restaurant may on occasion offer a free meal to a patron. However, all of these offerings are limited and selective. On the other hand, when it comes to Daya Devi, Her upakarams are unlimited and unrestricted and available to all. The usage of "sadA duhAnAm" needs to be appreciated in the context of Daya Devi. Many philanthropically inclined folks may place a condition that this is a one-time offering, whereby you can ask all you want but do not come back again. However, unlike this, Daya Devi's position is that beings of the Universe can come back to Her repeatedly in large numbers. They are never turned away. Instead, they become privy to Her grace every time. She is constantly seen dispensing Her anugraham to these beings. This is in the manner of Svami Parasara Bhattar's tribute in Gunaratna Kosham, "kasmaicidhanjalibharaM vahate vitIrya aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramaM padaM vA" (A passerby casually saluted Ranganayaki Thayar with folded hands and performed a pradakshinam for Her by sheer accident. So moved was Thayar by this act that She was ready to grant him aishvaryam, kaivalyam, and moksham itself. Despite granting all this She expressed regret in not having done enough for this great act undertaken by the individual.) This is further captured by Svami Parasara Bhattar in the tribute "tvaM lajjase kathaya ko(a)yamudAra bhAvaH" (I have no words to describe Your quality of audAryam, whereby despite granting the individual the parama puruShArtham, You still feel You have not done enough for him). Svami Desikan echoes the same sentiment in the salutation "vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm" of the present Daya Satakam verse. Svami Desikan declares that instead of being grateful for the numerous upakarams rendered by Daya Devi and joyously welcoming Her, he exhibits a disposition of


mAM nAthe vR^iShAdri paterdaye niveshaya

total rejection towards Daya Devi. This sentiment is captured in the salutation "adyApi devi bhavatIM avadhIrayantam" of this Daya Satakam verse. The inner meaning of this glorification is that one may have committed numerous sins prior to performance of sharaNAgati. However, upon realization of one's svarupam and undertaking the act of surrender, one still engages in sinful acts. This is absolutely unacceptable behavior. Svami Desikan's instruction here is that such acts need to be eliminated. It must be noted here that sinful acts are of two kinds - those committed unknowingly and those committed knowingly. For example, a rustic villager unknowingly crosses the tracks at a railroad crossing and is accosted by law enforcement authorities. The rustic pleads his innocence on the grounds that he is illiterate and cannot read signs. The authorities would let him go with a warning to not repeat this act. On the other hand, if one who is fully aware of the consequences engages in the same act, the authorities will apply due process and collect the appropriate payment of fines. In a like manner, there is no penalty for sins committed prior to the performance of Prapatti. On the other hand, post-prapatti offenses certainly entail consequences. Svami Desikan provides an excellent example to illustrate this point. If one anointed as a Crown prince engages in the act of stealing, the individual is universally despised. In a like manner, engaging in sinful actions after one has performed Prapatti is frowned upon by Lord Narayana. The consequences for such actions too are quite serious. There may only be a handful of folks who exhibit contriteness for their prior sinful acts and resolve to avoid these acts upon performance of Prapatti. However, the majority of people tend to continue their pre-prapatti ways. Although Svami Desikan's conduct has been blemishless pre and post prapatti, he takes on the plight of common folks and submits the salutation "adyApi devi bhavatIM avadhIrayantam" in this Daya Satakam verse. This denotes the fact that despite the numerous upakarams rendered by Daya Devi, he entirely shuns Her. This is in the manner of a mother who strives hard for the well-being of her son, by waking up early in the morning, preparing meals in a timely manner, ensuring that her son wakes up and bathes in time and implores that the son partakes of the meal prior to going to school/college. The son instead declares in a fit of anger that he does not want to eat and is in a rush to head out. This despite the fact that the mother has paid attention to the minute details for ensuring the son's well-being by placing the clothes to be worn and even accompanying the son to school. In this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan states that his disposition towards Daya Devi, who has rendered numerous upakarams, is one of absolutely shunning Her. Only when the son loses such a caring mother is her contribution appreciated with the regret that


anugrahamayIM vande
nityaM aj~nAta nigrahAm

she was not treated properly while alive. For sinful acts there is recourse of expiation through niShkriyai or prAyashcittam. This applies even to the five Maha PAthakAs (grave sins) of stealing gold, engaging in alcohol consumption, defiling the bed of one's Acharya by sinful behavior towards the Guru-Patni, aborting the foetus and associating with those engaged in these four acts. However, for the act of being ungrateful to those who have rendered major upakarams to an individual and forgetting this help, there is no prayashchittam. Here Svami Desikan alludes to the fact that the act of shunning Daya Devi, who has rendered numerous upakarams is akin to lack of gratitude for which there exists no prayashchittam. This is the import of Svami Desikan's impassioned appeal through the salutation "adyApi devi bhavatIM avadhIrayantam" of this Daya Satakam verse. The appeal is continued in the tribute "nAthe niveshaya vR^iShAdri paterdaye tvaM" wherein Svami Desikan states that Daya Devi alone is capable of performing this task. What is the task? The prose order for this tribute "mAM nAthe vR^iShAdri paterdaye niveshaya" helps understand this better. The import of this tribute is "Oh Mother Daya Devi! You need to unite me with the feet of Lord Srinivasa who stands on top of the Venkatam hill. You alone are capable of doing this." This is very similar to the outpouring of Svami Alavandar in the Stotra Ratnam salutation, "kadA punaH shankha rathA~Ngakalpaka dhvajAravindA~Nkusha vajralAncChanam trivikrama tvat caraNAmbujadvayaM madIya mUrdhAnamala~NkariShyati" (How I long for the time when Lotus feet of Trivikrama bearing the lines of conch, discus, lotus, Vajra and the like can adorn my head). Svami Desikan echoes the same sentiment as Svami Alavandar in this Daya Satakam verse. Only Daya Devi is able to grant the benefit of association with the lotus feet of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, in this instance Svami Desikan implores to Daya Devi to grant him this benefit. Daya Devi responds with the statement: "Oh Svami! What you have sought is a tall order. One can even attain Sri Vaikuntam through the act of Prapatti on account of the grace of the Acharya who administers this rite. However, being united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa is a completely different matter. Let alone being united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa, even gaining a darshanam of Lord Srinivasa at His shrine is a difficult task and involves considerable effort." Hence, Svami Desikan skillfully employs the usage "nAthe niveshaya" in this instance. One may sometimes undertake a pilgrimage to Tirumala with great trepidation that a darshanam of Lord Srinivasa may not be possible. However, during these instances one may be blessed with the extraordinary sevai of Lord Srinivasa in a most unexpected manner. On the other hand, one may undertake the pilgrimage with a great deal of preparation, having tickets reserved in advance for the darshanam of Lord Srinivasa. However, during


mR^idu hR^idaye daye

these instances due to some unforeseen circumstances, the darshanam may not be possible. Thus, it is instructive to note that Bhagavat Sevai comes about only when the grace of Daya Devi prevails. What Svami Desikan requests in this instance is the benefit of nitya kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa arising from the association with His feet. Daya Devi is pleased with this request of Svami Desikan and agrees to grant him this benefit. She then enquires "Oh Svami! I am ready to grant you this request. However, can you tell Me what significant act you have undertaken to entitle you to this benefit?" Svami Desikan answers this through the salutation "nyasta svarakShaNa bharaM tvayi mAM tvayaiva" of this Daya Satakam verse. The import of this tribute is that Svami Desikan has performed the act of bhara samarpaNam to Daya Devi. This makes him the property of Daya Devi. Thus, She incurs the responsibility of protecting him. As far as Svami Desikan is concerned, his protection requires uniting him with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Since Daya Devi inherits the responsibility of protecting Svami Desikan, She becomes obligated to fulfill this wish of Svami Desikan! Furthermore, Svami Desikan has kept up his end of the agreement, it is now up to Daya Devi to do Her part. The salutation "nyasta svarakShaNa bharaM" documents the fact that Svami Desikan has performed Bharanyasam at the feet of Daya Devi. She further enquires of Svami Desikan, "Did you do this by yourself or was someone else involved?" To this, Svami Desikan responds with the salutation "tvayi mAM tvayaiva" (It is only You that caused me to seek refuge in You. This was not my doing out of any independent thinking. Therefore, despite my cantankerous behavior of shunning You, You must ignore this fault and grace me with the benefit of union with the feet of Lord Srinivasa.) Here it is worthwhile recounting the anubhavam of Svami Parasara Bhattar in the context of the Rama avataram. Upon completion of His marriage ceremony, Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya along with Sita Devi and the large contingent of Dasharatha. This started a debate in Ayodhya as to who was greater - Rama or Sita. Be that as it may, subsequently the Lord had to serve His term in exile in the Dandaka forest. Upon completion of this, Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya and was coronated as the king. When the ceremony was completed and Lord Rama came out along with Sita, there was at that instant the formation of two groups, one proclaiming the greatness of Lord Rama and the other proclaiming the greatness of Sita Devi. Each camp highlighted the glorious acts of their chosen hero/heroine in an attempt to establish their supremacy. This gave rise to a heated debate. In an attempt at resolving this issue, each camp decided to place the respective acts of their chosen favorites on a scale and let the scale make the determination. Accordingly, Lord Rama's supporters declared that He is known as karuNA



Daya Devi transforms the nigraha sankalpam of Lord Narayana into one of anugraham

kAkutsthar. The supporters of Sita declared that She is superior on account of the tribute “anugrahamayIM vande nityaM aj~nAta nigrahAm” (Lord Rama at least had to mete out punishment. However, the term punishment is non-existent in Sita Devi’s dictionary). To this the supporters of Lord Rama countered that He is known for gracing those belonging to the adversary camp, for example Kakasura and Vibhishana and thus, Lord Rama is beyond compare. Sita Devi’s camp responded with the statement that both Kakasura and Vibhishana had to submit their appeal of goptrutva varaNam (nobody else in the Universe was able to offer them refuge). However, not so with Sita Devi. The rakshasis guarding Her were ardhrAparadhis (eternal sinners) engaged in the most heinous acts of sin. However, without their seeking Her grace, Sita Devi offered them protection and saved them from the wrath of Hanuman. Now, can this act of Sita Devi be trumped? It may be noted that the contest between the two camps pertains to the role of Lord Rama and Sita protecting the Universe. The verdict from Svami Parasara Bhattar is “laghutarA rAmasya ghoShThI kR^itA” denoting the fact that the scale tipped in favor of Sita Devi’s camp.

Thus, Svami Desikan argues that the camp of Sita Devi is elevated when it comes to protecting those who have sought refuge and by extension this applies to Daya Devi due to the fact that if a concrete form were assigned to the Daya guNam it would be Mahalakshmi Thayar. Therefore, having become part of Daya Devi’s ghoshti, Svami Desikan seeks the benefit of being united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa by way of his protection. An important Sastra visesham is conveyed in the tribute “nAthe niveshaya” tribute of this Daya Satakam verse. Those who perform sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana request the benefit of moksham at the end of their bodily existence (etat dehAvasAnemAm). However, upon performance of Prapatti, if they are unable to tolerate the consequences of their Prarabdha karma prevailing until the end of their earthly existence, they can definitely seek moksham at the earliest opportunity by resorting to sharaNAgati for Lord Srinivasa. Thus, even though one has performed moksha prapatti and is guaranteed moksham as a consequence, Svami Desikan assures them that if they acquire Arthi viseshatvam (unable to tolerate the separation from Lord Narayana and develop an intense longing for nitya kaikmaryam for which their prevailing prarabdha karma is a bar), they can take recourse to another sharaNAgati to hasten their moksham. Hence, with the prayerful thoughts of the multifaceted upakarams rendered by Daya Devi adiyen seeks the grace of Daya Devi and through Her efforts the grace of Lord Srinivasa for all listeners of this upanyasam and concludes the exposition of this verse.”



tvayi mAM tvayaiva

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“Oh Daya Devi! What a colossal series of helpful acts for humanity You have undertaken! There are many things that we can recall in terms of all that a sensible sentient has received from You. The last of them is emphasized here. Specifically, You have caused me to perform Prapatti. That gives the assurance that we are freed from the cycles of births and deaths hereafter. Such a motherly Goddess, I have spurned, offended, and displeased. Fie on me! Today - even now - I continue on the path of utter disregard to You, Oh, Mother Daya Devi! How so? By offending Her, disobeying the Sastras, committing prohibited acts, and diligently avoiding prescribed duties. However, despite these transgressions, You will not allow me to go to hell because I am a Prapanna and You would like to save me. Please come to my rescue. I have reposed my burden in You. What do I pray for at this moment? It is to be united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa at His abode in the Venkatam hill. There I shall be engaged in service. With regard to the sins accumulated in the post-prapatti period, please devise an appropriate remedy, namely Prayaschittam or punaH Prapatti (a repeat of Prapatti for the post-moksha-prapatti generated sins). It must be noted that this import is not explicit in this verse. However, there can be no doubt that this is Svami Desikan’s intent. A host of commentators from the Desika Sampradayam would attest to this.”



Slokam 92

नैसर्गिकेण तरसा करुणे नियुक्ता

निम्नेतरेऽपि मयि ते विततिर्यदि स्यात्।

विस्मापयेद्वृषगिरीश्वरमप्यवार्या

वेलातिलङ्घन दशेव महाम्बुराशेः ॥९२ ॥

naisargikeNa tarasA karuNe niyuktA

nimentare(a)pi mayi te vitatir yadi syAt|

vismApayedvR^iShagirIshvaramapyavAryA

velAtila~Nghana dasheva mahAmburAsheH||92



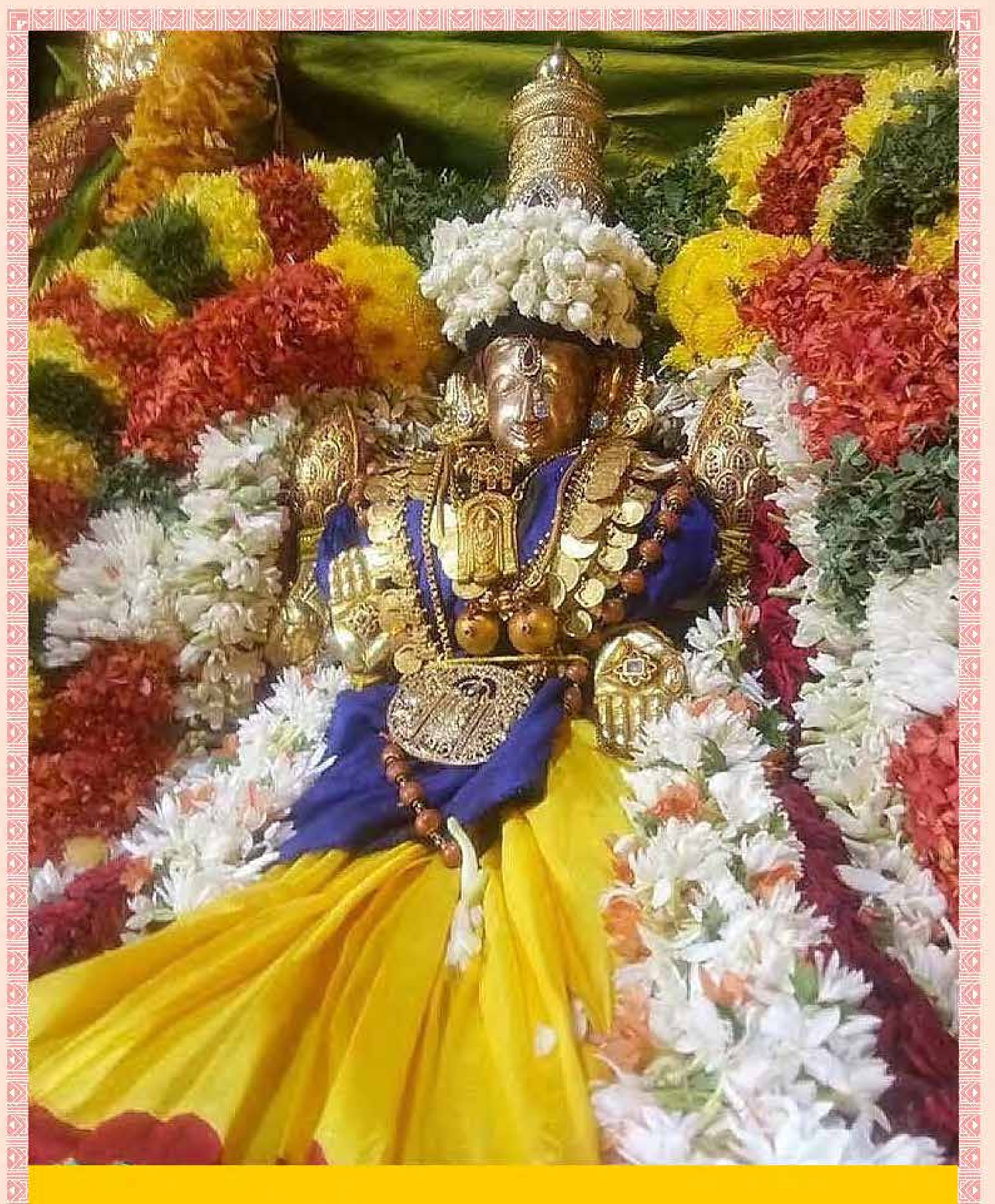
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:



We have arrived at the tenth decad of Daya Satakam. We are specifically covering the second verse from this decad here. In the previous verse, Svami Desikan submitted a prayerful appeal to Daya Devi requesting Her to unite him with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Since Svami Desikan regards the shrine of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill to be no different from Parama Padam, Svami Desikan seeks the benefit of being united with Lord Srinivasa's feet in order to derive the bliss of Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. Those who perform sharaNAgati to Lord Narayana request the benefit of moksham at the end of their bodily existence (etat dehavasAnemAm). However, upon performance of Prapatti, if they are unable to tolerate the consequences of their Prarabdha karma prevailing until the end of their earthly existence, they can definitely seek moksham at the earliest

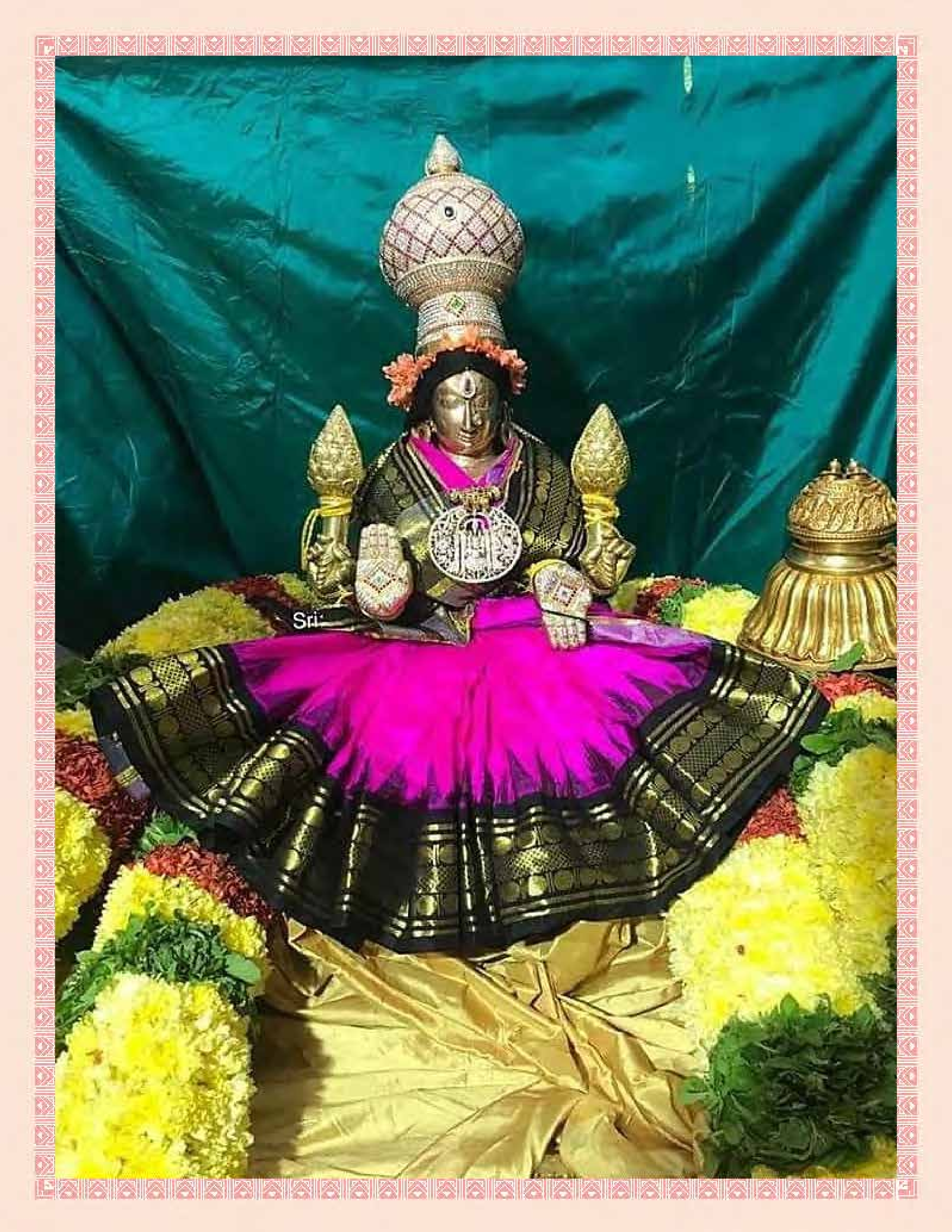
opportunity by resorting to sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa. Thus, even though one has performed moksha prapatti and is guaranteed moksham as a consequence, Svami Desikan assures them that if they acquire Arthi viseshatvam (unable to tolerate the separation from Lord Narayana and develop an intense longing for nitya kaikmaryam for which their prevailing prarabdha karma is a bar), they can take recourse to another sharaNAgati to hasten their moksham. The inner meaning is that Svami Desikan is unable to wait for the Prarabdha karma to be expended. Instead he is overcome by an intense desire for Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, he submits the appeal to Daya Devi requesting that She wipe out any remnants of his Prarabdha Karma and render him a fitting receptacle for the grace of Lord Srinivasa by uniting him with Lord Srinivasa's feet.

It must be remembered that Svami Desikan was an avataram of the GhaNTha in the Sannidhi of Lord Srinivasa in accordance with the tribute "ve~NkaTeshAvatAro(a)yaM tat ghaNTAM sho(a)thavA bhavet". However, in the spirit of Lord Rama's declaration in the Ramayanam "AtmAnaM mAnuShaM manye rAmaM dasharathAtmajam" (You hail Me as the Supreme Being. However, as far as I know I am an ordinary human being born as the son of Dasharatha), Svami Desikan too depicts himself as an ordinary person and conveys the thought process and characteristics of an ordinary human being in his Sri Suktis. However, for us there is no difference between Lord Srinivasa and Svami Desikan. The mangalasasanam for Svami Desikan in the Desika Mangalam storam is "ve~NkaTeshAvatAro(a)yaM tat ghaNTAM sho(a)thavA bhavet yatIndrAM sho(a)thavetyevaM vitarkyAyAstu ma~NgaLam", which eloquently attests to this fact. In unambiguous terms, Svami Desikan is hailed as the avataram of Lord Srinivasa. From a commonly held perspective Svami Desikan can also be revered as the incarnation of Lord Srinivasa's Temple bell. It is also true that Svami Desikan established again the path of Svami Bhashyakarar. Thus, it is not inappropriate to regard Svami Desikan as an incarnation of Svami Bhashyakarar. Daya Devi is fully aware of these facts. Nevertheless, She views with amazement Svami Desikan's thought process as an ordinary human being who has acquired "Arthi visheShatvam" and thus submits an appeal to be united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, Daya Devi too acts in a manner that satisfies the numerous requests made by Svami Desikan taking on the thought process of an ordinary human being. It may be helpful to dwell on the Srimad Ramayanam incident where upon conclusion of the war and the destruction of Ravana, Vibhishana was installed on the throne and Lord Rama requested Vibhishana that Sita Devi be brought in His presence after a proper bath, bedecked with ornaments and adorned with silk

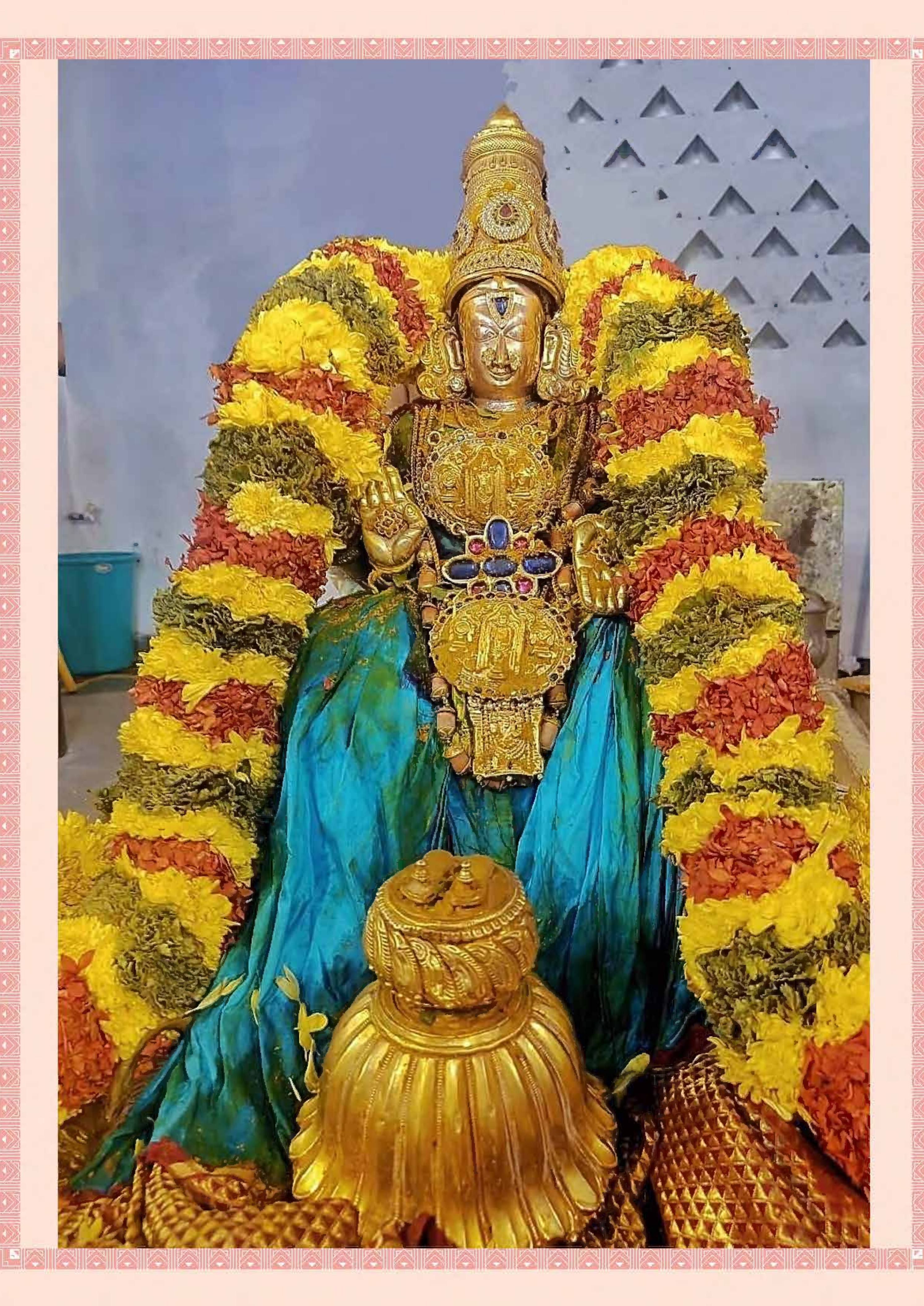


Oh Daya Devi, please cast Your compassionate eye-glances on adiyen

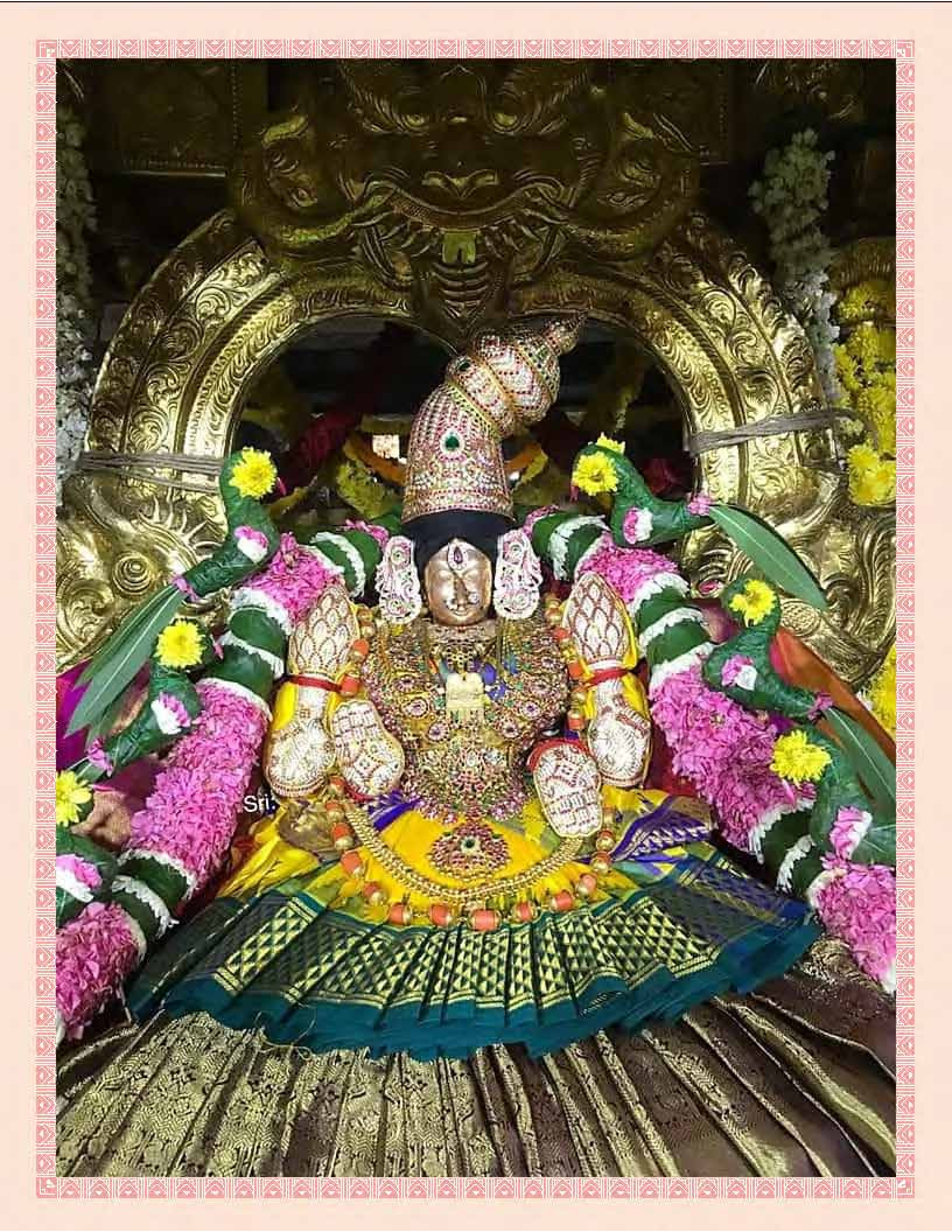
vastrams. When the palanquin carrying Sita was making its way towards Lord Rama, the Vanara army was anxious to see Her and thus jostled for a good view. Beholding this, Lord Rama instructed that Sita Devi come out of the palanquin and walk towards Him so that the Vanara army could see Sita Devi in all Her glory. Lord Rama in a fit of anger addressed Sita harshly, "There are ten directions available to You. You are free to go in any direction You desire. It was not for You that I undertook the annihilation of Ravana and his horde of Rakshasas. Nor was it to regain You that the great bridge across the ocean was constructed. It was entirely for safeguarding the blemishless reputation of the Ikshvaku dynasty that I undertook these acts." Sita Devi did not utter a single word in reply. Instead, in order to establish Her chastity, Sita Devi performed an agni pravesham (entry into the sacred fire). Agni is unable to burn the extremely chaste Sita Devi and renders Her in Her pristine form to Lord Rama. All the devatas assembled there saluted Lord Rama in unison and declared "Oh Rama! You are the supreme being Vishnu. Is it appropriate to act in the manner of an ordinary mortal towards the extremely chaste Sita Devi? She is none other than Mahalakshmi Thayar, Your eternal consort. It may be helpful to recall the puranic salutation "rAghavatve bhavat sitA rukmiNI KrR^iShNa janmani anyeShu cAvatAreShu viShNornityAnapAyinI" (Mahalakshmi is never separate from Lord Narayana. If the Lord incarnated as Rama, He was accompanied by Mahalakshmi through the incarnation of Sita Devi. If the Lord incarnated as Krishna He was accompanied by Mahalakshmi through the incarnation of Rukmini. When this is the case, is it appropriate for You, oh Rama, to behave in this manner? Are You not fully aware of Sita Devi's essential nature?". These are the questions posed by the devatas. Lord Rama declared "You have glorified Me as the Supreme Lord Vishnu. However, as far as I know, I am an ordinary human being that has taken birth as the son of Dasharatha." Thus, the purpose of the Rama avataram was to establish the behavior of an ideal human being in conformance with samAnya dharma. Likewise, in Kaliyugam Lord Srinivasa incarnated as Svami Desikan to establish again the code of conduct for ordinary human beings. It is in this context that Svami Desikan's "Arthi visheSham" and intense longing for moksham needs to be understood. This resulted in Svami Desikan's appeal to Daya Devi to unite him with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Sri Tirumangai Azhvar declares in his Periya Tirumozhi tribute "tUnkAr piRavikkaL innam pukappeitu vA~nkAi enRu cintittu nAn ataRkanci pAmpODoru kUraiyilE payinRArpOl tA~nkAduLLam taLLum en tAmarai kaNNA" This samsaram is verily like a snake. A certain individual was instructed to remain in a hut for the duration of the night and not to leave until the onset of daylight. While sleeping on the floor, he beheld a serpent. Not knowing


Sri

when the serpent would fall to the floor and sting him, he is restless. He is also unable to leave due to the instruction to stay put until day-break. The plight of those steeped in Samsara is akin to that of this man. Can he break free from samsara? Definitely not. His prarabdha karma comes in the way. Only Lord Narayana is capable of redeeming him. Thus, Svami Desikan adopts the thought process of a commoner immersed in samsara seeking to break free and submits his appeal in this context. This is captured in the previous verse. Daya Devi too intently hears the plea of Svami Desikan. It is instructive to note Daya Devi's dilemma in seeking to grant Svami Desikan's wish of "nAthe niveshaya" of the previous verse in that if the requested benefit is granted right away by viewing this as an Artha Prapatti, the purpose of Svami Desikan's incarnation would remain unfulfilled. It must be borne in mind that out of Her extreme compassion for beings of the universe, Daya Devi causes Lord Srinivasa to undertake numerous avatarams including His avataram as the Acharya, Svami Desikan. Therefore, would Daya Devi do something to undermine the very purpose of the avataram that She has orchestrated with a great deal of effort? Furthermore, it must be remembered that each avataram of Lord Srinivasa has a distinct purpose. In the case of the Rama avataram it was the construction of the great bridge. For the Krishna avataram it was the Gitopadesam. Likewise, the main purpose of Svami Desikan's avataram remains to be accomplished. Therefore, if Daya Devi grants Svami Desikan's appeal submitted in the manner of a common human being bound to samsara, She would preclude the realization of the main purpose of this avataram. In this instance, the main purpose of Lord Srinivasa's incarnation as Svami Desikan was to bring to the forefront the principles and practices of Bhagavad Ramanuja Darsanam and establish them on a firm foundation with an impenetrable fortress. Not only that, another major undertaking of the avataram of Svami Desikan was the propagation of Prapatti Sastram as a means for moksham, suitable for adoption by all without regard to caste, creed, sex, affiliation and the like. This had to be carried out through numerous kalakshepams, authorship of granthams, stotrams, and Sri Suktis as well as the manner of practice of Prapatti. How then could She accede to Svami Desikan's request in the manner of Artha prapatti, with so much left to be accomplished? Svami Desikan himself declares upon completion of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram "nirviShTaM yatisArvabhauma vacasAm AvR^ittibhiH yauvanam" (My days of youth were spent in complete immersion in the Sri Suktis of Svami Bhashyakarar first through study in the Kalakshepam mode under Acharya and then through their propagation to deserving sishyas through Kalakshepam.) Svami Desikan declares in the Abhiti stavam salutation "yatipravara bhAratI

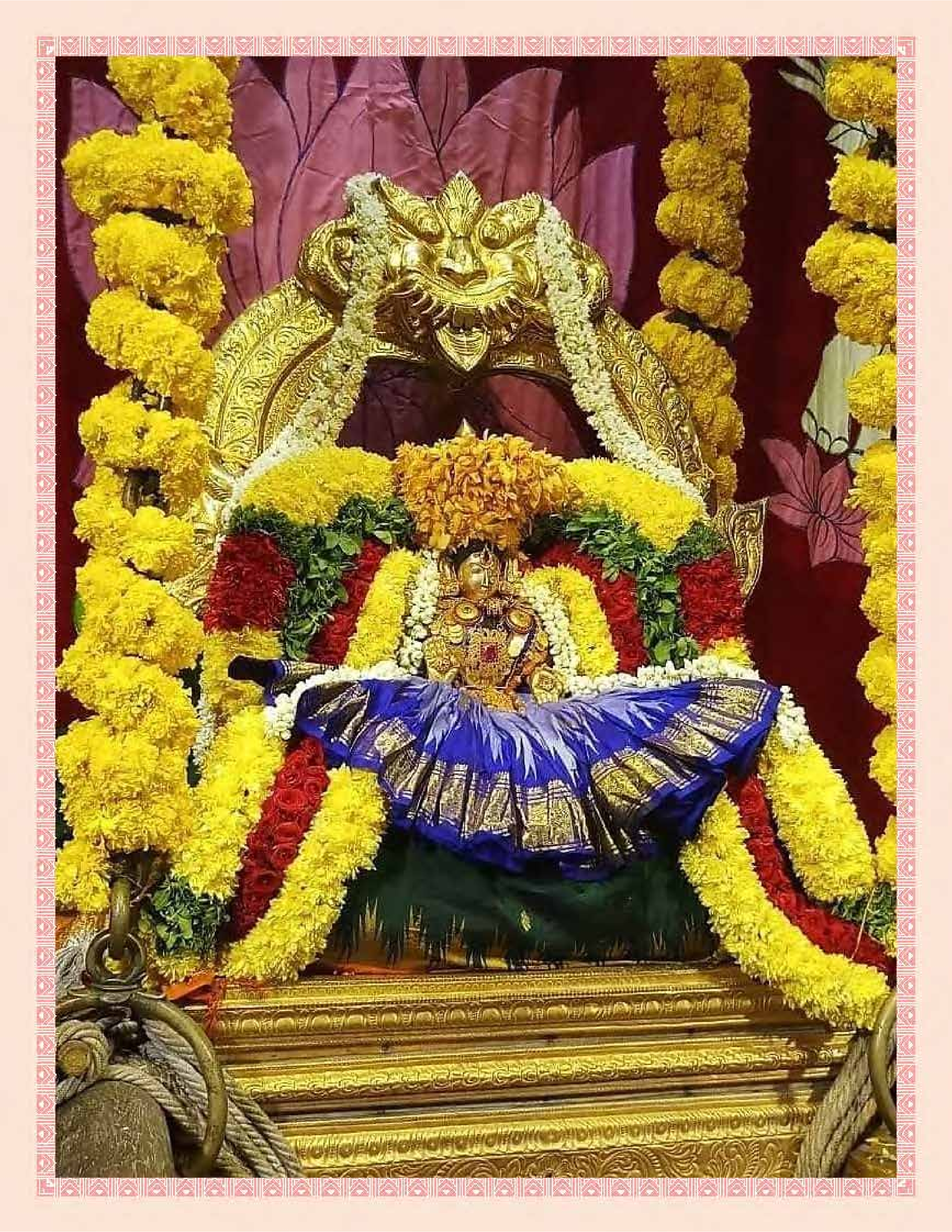


rasabhareNa nItaM vayaH praphullapalitaM shiraH paramiha kShamaM prArthaye" (The cause of all my grey hair from advancing years was complete immersion in the Sri Suktis of Svami Bhashyakarar through gaining their purport from Acharya kalakshepam, propagating them to sishyas in the same mode, and authorship of granthams that highlighted their nuances.) Since Daya Devi cannot bring an abrupt end to the avataram of Svami Desikan, with much of the purpose of the avatram remaining unrealized, Daya Devi patiently hears the appeal of Svami Desikan in the previous verse and does not respond at all. Svami Desikan perceives the silence of Daya Devi and realizes that there has to be good reason for this silence on the part of Daya Devi. Specifically, Svami Desikan tries to gain an insight into Daya Devi's thought process along the lines of "This individual (a common man - by no means Svami Desikan who has adopted the reasoning of a commoner) has committed numerous sins prior to prapatti. The rite of Prapatti was administered in the hope that he would reform himself and behave in a manner pleasing to the Lord. However, even after performing Prapatti he has resorted to his prior sinful ways. How then is it possible to ensure that he begets Bhagavad Kaimkaryam at the end of his earthly existence? Would the post-Prapatti sins not incur the displeasure of Lord Srinivasa? What then is the recourse? In Vedic rituals such as Agnihotram, the submission of havis is known as puroDasham. The devatas are the recipients of the havis. Thus, the puroDasham is meant exclusively for devatas. Can a mere dog aspire to receive this? Definitely not. It is in this spirit of intense naichyam (self-deprecation) that Svami Desikan reasons that he is perhaps unfit for the puroDasham of Srivaikuntam and nitya kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. It may be helpful to recall on a related note the anubhavam of Sri Andal from the Nacchiyar Tirumozhi. Andal was the only female Azhvar incarnation. The father of every girl is anxious to finalize the marriage of the girl to a suitable groom (bharta - one who protects his wife). Sri Periya Azhvar, the father of Sri Andal was no exception to this sentiment. Perhaps he had in mind a groom, who had undertaken Veda adhyayanam in the proper manner and had all the Sri Vaishanava lakshaNams (traits). Sri Andal declares in the Nacchiyar Tirumozhi that She is not made for mere mortals. Instead, She declares that Her birth and hence Her life are meant exclusively for the supreme Lord Narayana. This is captured in the pasuram "vAniDai vAzhum avvAnavarkku maRaiyavar vELviyil vakutta avi kAniDai tirivatOr nari pukuntu kaDappatum mOppatum ceivatoppa UniDai Azhi ca~nkuttamarkkenRu unnittezhunta en taDa mulaikaL mAniDavarkkenRu pEcchu paDil vAzhakillEn kaNDAi manmatanE" (I am not of that kind. I have taken birth exclusively for the Lord who bears the discus and conch. Thus, a life that would



entail serving mere mortals is absolutely unacceptable to Me.) In the instance of Svami Desikan's appeal however, it is one of intense self-deprecation in the manner of the puroDasham offering being unsuitable for a dog. Thus, he submits an appeal to Daya Devi to review his request from the previous verse in light of this thought process in this verse. Specifically, Svami Desikan submits in this verse that Daya Devi is well versed in the nuance of aghaTitaghaTana sAmarthyam (the act of establishing something that does not apparently exist from a commonly held perspective). For example, the Sun cannot be masked easily. However, Lord Krishna effortlessly accomplished this through the use of the Sudarsana Chakra in the Mahabharata war. Similarly, a mountain cannot be lifted. However, Lord Krishna effortlessly held the Govardhana mountain on His little finger. These are examples of "aghaTitaghaTana sAmarthyam". Constructing a bridge across the mighty ocean is impossible. However, Lord Rama accomplished that during His avataram - again an instance of "aghaTitaghaTana sAmarthyam" Daya Devi too is endowed with "aghaTitaghaTana sAmarthyam". Therefore, Svami Desikan appeals to Her to demonstrate this in his case by reiterating that in Lord Narayana's view he may be unfit for nitya Bhagavad Kaimkaryam in the manner of dog being unworthy of receiving the puroDasham offering of a yaj~nam. Thus, he requests Daya Devi to intercede on his behalf and render this possible.

The Daya Satakam verse under study now is "naisargikeNa tarasA karuNe niyuktA nimentare(a)pi mayi te vitatir yadi syAtvismApayed vR^iShagirIshvaramapi avAryA velAtila~Nghana dasheva mahAmburAsheH". Oh Daya Devi! You need to demonstrate Your inherent nature. If done in this context, Lord Srinivasa will have no objection. You seem to be under the impression that Lord Srinivasa is of the disposition "karmAnubandhi phaladAnaratasya bhartuH" (He dispenses fruits in accordance with one's karma - good acts being rewarded with benefits and sins being punished appropriately). This is the widely held principle from which Lord Srinivasa never deviates. If He acts any differently, Lord Srinivasa will incur "vaiShamya doSham" (the stigma of exhibiting partiality selectively). For example, the actions of Lord Srinivasa may be viewed as a sport. However, even the act of sport is governed by rules. If the sport of Lord Srinivasa can be viewed as a chess game, then each move has restrictions. Pawns can be moved only one square at a time, the knight can only be moved in an L-shaped manner, bishops diagonally, and the like. In the case of Lord Srinivasa's sport, the governing rules are the Sastras, from which there can be no deviation. Thus, even though the acts of creation, sustenance, and dissolution are undertaken by Lord Srinivasa as an act of sport, it is carried out in accordance with the sastras (a rule book so to speak), that outline



specific fruits for specific actions (good or bad). Lord Srinivasa merely dispenses these recommendations from the rule book with full compliance. With a mere glance Lord Srinivasa discerns that the mountainous sin pile of the jivan in this instance seems taller than the Venkatam hill itself. How then would redemption be possible? How could He enable nitya Bhagavad Kaimkaryam for this being? Svami Desikan implores to Daya Devi in this verse that be that as it may with regard to Lord Srinivasa's position of being an impartial adjudicator faced with the dilemma posed by the mountainous sin-pile standing before him precluding redemption for him, if Daya Devi makes up her mind to help him, he will certainly be redeemed. This is the purport of Svami Desikan's appeal to Daya Devi in this verse captured in the salutation "naisargikeNa tarasA karuNe niyuktA nimentare(a)pi mayi te vitatiryadisyAt". An instance from Ramayanam is recalled here. Although this is not mentioned in the Valmiki Ramayanam, it has been often quoted and therefore, adiyen is relating it in this instance. After sighting Sita Devi in the Ashoka vanam and offering Her words of comfort, Hanuman decided to instill fear in the Rakshasas and Rakshasis of Lanka. In an attempt to provoke a fight, Hanuman laid waste to the Ashoka Vanam. Angered by this, Ravana sent out a series of Rakshasas of increasing might until his own son, Akshaya Kumara, met his end at Hanuman's hands. Finally, Ravana sent Indrajith to fight with Hanuman. Indrajith used the Brahmastra to subdue Hanuman. The Rakshasas bound Hanuman with additional ropes and dragged him to the court of Ravana. Ravana was seated on a lofty throne at great height and Hanuman was way below. Hanuman reasoned that he needed to be seated above Ravana and decided to roll up his tail into a massive structure taller than the throne of Ravana and thus was seated at a height above Ravana. This account of Hanuman rolling up his tail into a massive structure exceeding the height of Ravana's throne is not contained in the Valmiki Ramayanam. However, adiyen refers to it due to its popularity. In a like fashion, we may seek to sit on a higher peak than Lord Srinivasa. How is this possible? If one looks at one's sin-pile, its size is greater than that of the Venkatam hill. Therefore, it is very easy to seat ourselves above this mountain of sins and be at a height greater than that of Lord Srinivasa. While not expressing any shame, grief, or regret for committing sins of this magnitude, one takes delight in seating oneself on this mountain that is of a greater height than the Venkatam hill so much so that the Lord has to look up to see them. In order to destroy this mountainous sin-pile, there needs to be a torrential flow of Daya that uproots this mountain and simply washes away all the sins thereby ensuring their destruction at the root. This calls for the anugraham of Daya Devi to result in a torrential flow of sufficient volume and height to effortlessly

bring about the permanent destruction of this mountain of sins. So much so that Lord Srinivasa looks on in astonishment at this extraordinary act of Daya Devi. This alone will pave the way for my redemption Oh Mother Daya Devi! The anvaya kramam for this salutation "te vitatiH mayi yadi syAt" is helpful here. vitati denotes the torrential flow of Daya Devi. What happens when the Daya flow falls upon me? It is in the manner of "naisargikeNa tarasA" in that it is inherently torrential and all engulfing. The thought being conveyed here is that a mere flow is insufficient. It needs to be in the form of a tsunami to wipe out my mountainous sin-pile and destroy it at the root.



mahAmburAsheH

In this context, it is helpful to exmine the tribute "n velAtila~Nghana dasheva mahAmburAsheH" from this Daya Satakam verse. "amburAsheH" denotes water body, whereas "mahAmburAsheH" denotes an immeasurably large water body, like an ocean (ocean too may be a misnomer since its breadth and depth can be measured). The "mahAmburAsheH" denoting the torrential flow of Daya Devi has the all engulfing characteristic of the mighty ocean during the time of PraLayam (dissolution). It must be noted that the ocean seldom breaches its boundary, the sea-shore. Even during the days of Amavasya and PaurNami, during the cresting

tidal waves the ocean exceeds its boundary only by a short distance. Only on the rarest of occasions, like a tsunami does the ocean breach its boundary. The essential nature of Lord Srinivasa is very much like that of the ocean, namely restrained by His position of having to dispense the appropriate fruits to jivans in accordance with their actions good or bad.

However, Svami Desikan implores to Daya Devi in this instance that Her flow should not be similarly restricted. Instead, it should break free of all boundaries and gush forth in an all-engulfing manner to rid him of his mountainous sin-pile at the root. This must be in the same way as the tsunami that is capable of washing away a three storied building with its cresting waves. This characteristic is captured in the tribute "velAtila~Nghana dasheva mahAmburAsheH" of this Daya Satakam verse. This sort of flow is inherent to Daya Devi and is not forcibly adopted. This is documented in the salutation "naisargikeNa tarasA" of this Daya Satakam verse. If this is accomplished by Daya Devi, it results in "nimentare(a)pi mayi te vitatir yadi syAt". It is well known that water flows from a high point to the low point and fills up puddles along the way. Svami Desikan here implores to Daya Devi, that She must regard these puddles as trivial and instead make Her flow so copious and forceful that it must drown out his mountainous sin-pile. What can Lord Srinivasa do upon beholding this act of Yours? Would He restrain You? Most definitely not. Instead, He would look on in amazement that You have accomplished the task of destroying my mountainous sin-pile and that this was something that He himself was unsure of undertaking. This will bring about a transformation in Lord Srinivasa causing Him to join You in the act of blessing me. The tribute "vismApayed vR^iShagirIshvaramapi avAryA velAtila~Nghana dasheva" of this Daya Satakam verse thus denotes the transformation in the disposition of Lord Srinivasa brought about by this extraordinary act of Daya Devi. First, Lord Srinivasa looks on in amazement at Daya Devi casting Her eye-glances on Svami Desikan and then engulfing him with Her torrential flow to destroy the mountainous sin-pile. He then joins Daya Devi in conferring His anugraham upon Svami Desikan. As a consequence, Svami Desikan declares that he becomes fit for rendering kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa. This act can be undertaken by Daya Devi alone and none else. A few sUkShma (hidden) meanings need to be examined. First the usage "naisargikeNa tarasA karuNe niyuktA" needs to be considered. This denotes something inherent. Here the reference is to Lord Srinivasa's Daya. The implication is that inherently, Lord Srinivasa is replete with Daya. If this is inherent to Lord Srinivasa, then no effort is called for on the part of the jivan to invoke this Daya. Its inherent nature will cause it to flow and rid jivans of their sins. Water from the hill



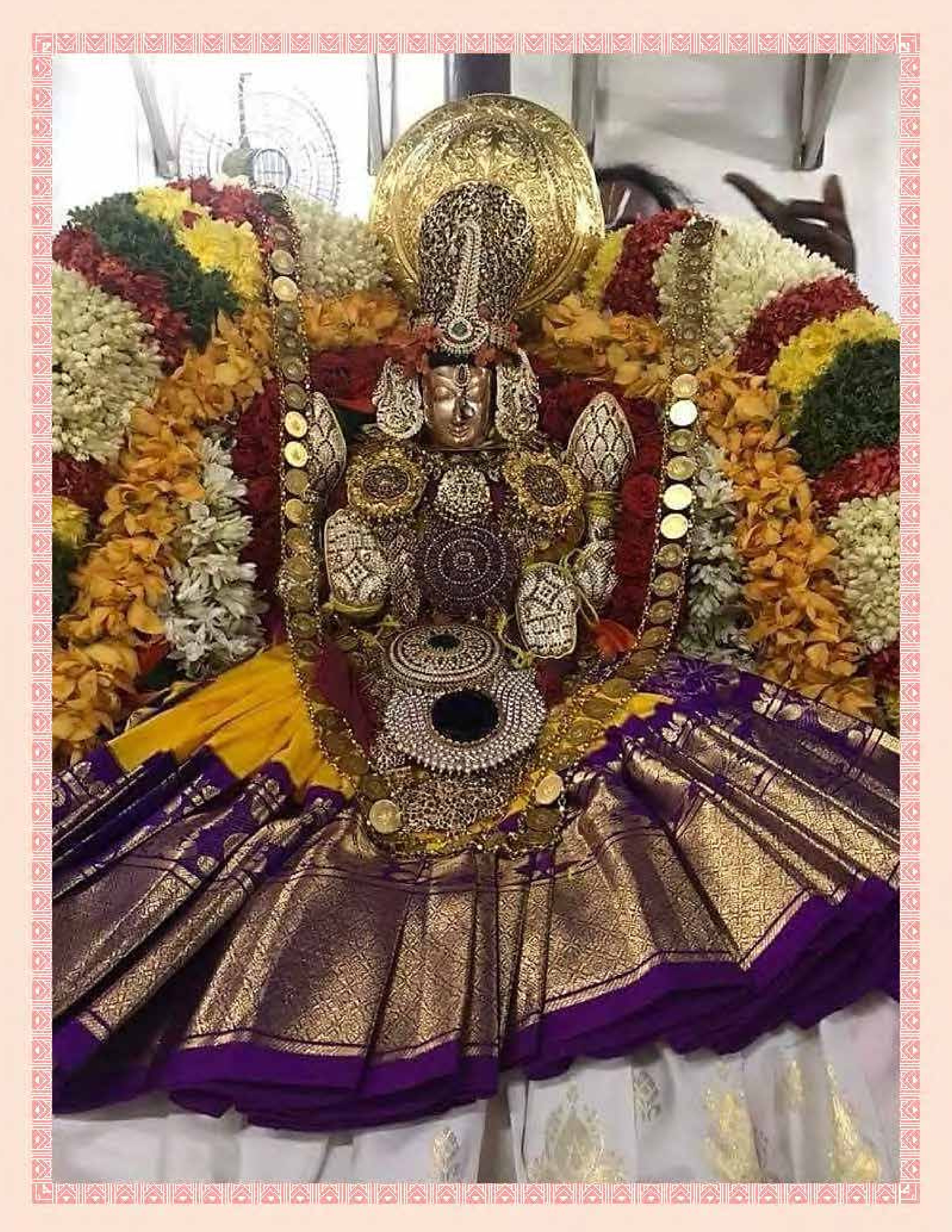
stream flows down and inherently washes away everything in its wake and is a good reflector of light. Therefore superficially, this verse may convey the impression that no effort is required on one's part. Lord Srinivasa, who is inherently compassionate, will bring forth His Daya flow to grace all beings. No special effort on our part is called for. This is in the manner of one safeguarding one's wealth. When one is handed property, no special request from the property is needed for safeguarding it. Instead, one's inherent nature will ensure that this is safeguarded. Likewise for Lord Srinivasa, when it comes to protecting jivans, He is fully aware that they belong to Him and thus protecting them is His inherent nature. No special prayer from these jivas is required for this purpose. Now the manner in which safeguarding wealth takes place is when there is a specific association of the wealth with a person. The person only protects his own wealth and not that of others or wealth that is maintained in a bank. In the context of Lord Srinivasa's protection, one must need to ensure through an appeal that Lord Srinivasa accepts the jivan as His own. Only upon attaining the sense of belonging to Lord Srinivasa does subsequent protection come about. The rationale here is that thus far the jivan was under the misguided impression that he was independent and belonged to none other than himself and was thus deluded into believing that he could protect himself. However, now the jivan has realized that he is unequivocally the property of Lord Srinivasa. Hence the jivan submits the appeal to Lord Srinivasa for acceptance as His property.



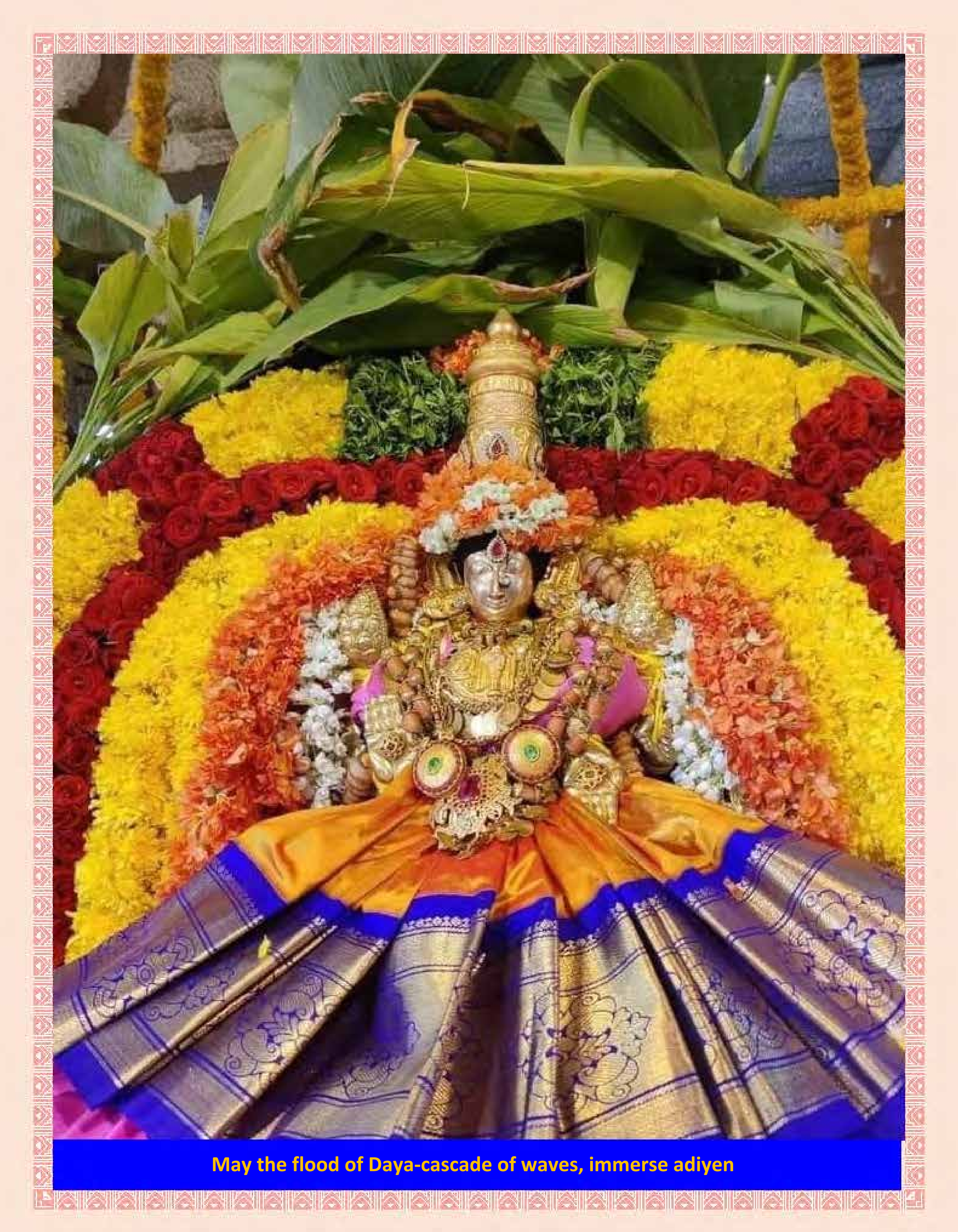
This was captured in the tribute "nAthe niveshaya" of the previous verse. This refers to the fact that all that is required to open the floodgates to Lord Srinivasa's Daya is the submission of a prayer that the jivan belongs to the Lord and that it is automatically the Lord's responsibility to protect the jivan. The Lord too expects this prayerful submission as documented in the Srimad Rahasyatraya saram tribute "rakShApekShAm pratIkShate". Thus, once the Daya Kataksham falls upon the jivan, even the seemingly grave offenses of the jivan that have accumulated as a mountainous sin-pile are at once destroyed. This is an important purport documented in the previous Daya Satakam verse and continued in this verse. In this verse, Svami Desikan describes the fact that Lord Srinivasa looks on in amazement

at the astounding act of Daya Devi, who first casts Her compassionate eye-glances on Svami Desikan (who has taken on the role of an errant baddha jivan). She then unleashes Her torrential and copious nectarine flow, which effortlessly washes away the accumulated sin pile rendering Svami Desikan a fitting entity to render Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa. Another important sUkShma vishayam contained herein is that a few obstacles may arise in the context of rendering Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This may be in the form of long life but bereft of energy to render kaimkaryam or some other light punishment on account of which the jivan is unable to render kaimkaryam. The appeal submitted by Svami Desikan in this context is that he requests freedom from all these obstacles and punishment, so that he is readily able to render Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Another important point to be noted here is that from a common worldly perspective Svami Desikan (taking on the role of a common Baddha jivan) may not have undertaken any special act to gain the grace of Lord Srinivasa. However, as far as Lord Srinivasa is concerned, sharaNAgati has been performed at His feet by Svami Desikan/baddha jivan. Therefore, this is sufficient to invoke the grace of Lord Srinivasa.

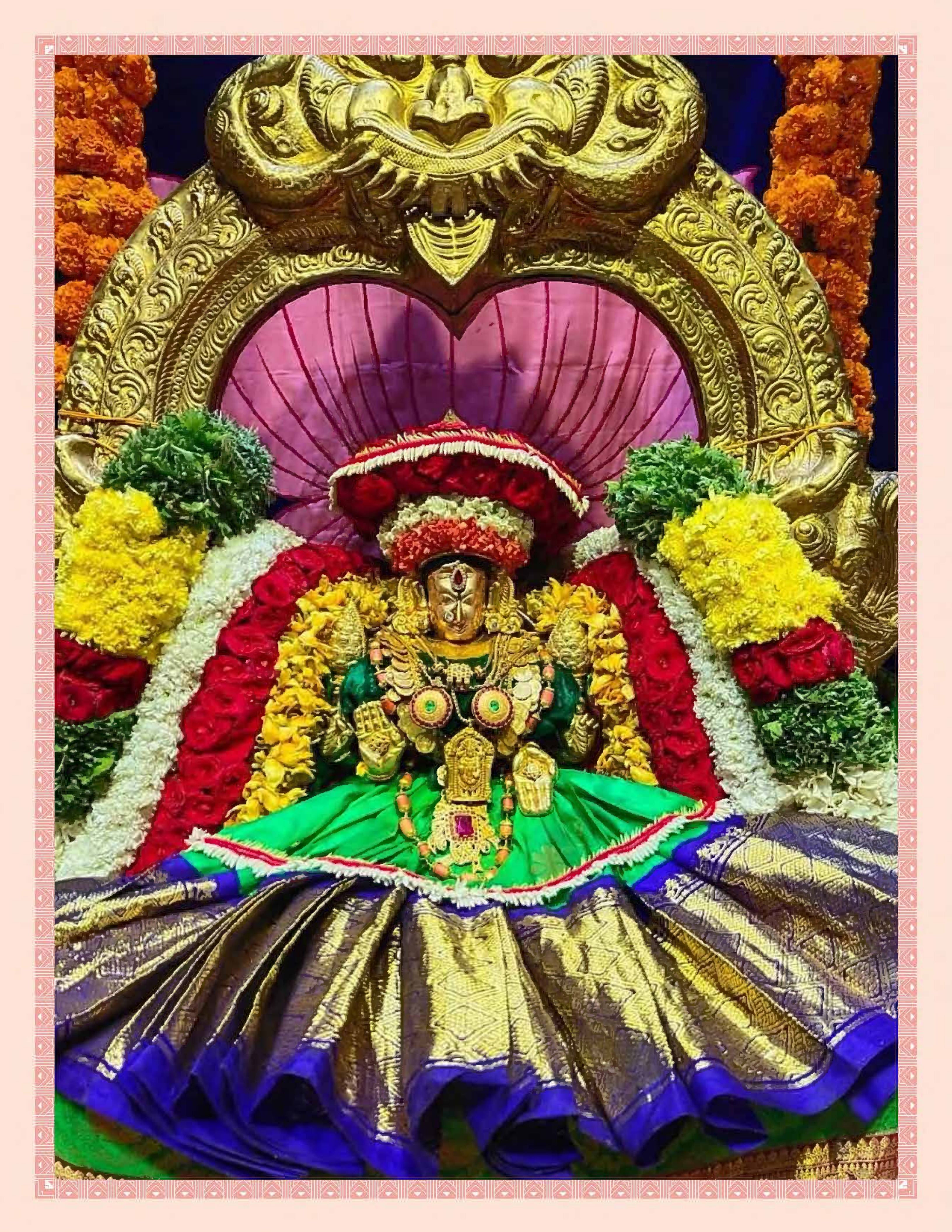
This is further captured in the statement "acheShTamAnam AsInam shrIHkancit upatiShTati karmekarmAnusR^itya anyaH na prApyam adhigacChati" "acheShTamAnam AsInam" denotes the fact that one has not undertaken any special act. Such a person inexplicably gains a lot of wealth as indicated in the tribute "shrIHkancit upatiShTati". Another individual undertakes great efforts in a toiling manner. However, his state is such that he does not have enough for his next meal as captured in the tribute "karmekarmAnusR^itya anyaH na prApyam adhigacChati". Why this discrepancy? It is undoubtedly the former and latter's prArabdha karma. The former has performed some great act in a previous birth on account of which he is blessed with great wealth gained without any effort, while the latter has committed some grave sin on account of which despite his best effort, no wealth accrues. Svami Desikan implores to Daya Devi to be graced in the manner of the individual who has not undertaken any special act but is blessed with abundant wealth. Next as a prelude to the next verse, Svami Desikan describes the torrential flow of Daya Devi here. The Daya flow is immeasurable and unlimited in extent. It is capable of washing away the gravest of sins committed by an individual even they are stacked up in a mountain form whose height exceeds that of the Venkatam hill itself! Adiyen narrates a personal instance in this context. Adiyen had the Bhagyam of taking part in the Samprokshanam festivities at Kumbakonam for three days. During this, the parayanams for Lord Aravamudhan were excellent. The Srivaishnava goshti was present in full force making for a joyous experience. The



large number of Bhagavatas assembled here lent a sense of samruddhi (fulfillment) to the proceedings. The beauty of Lord Aravamudhan and SrI Komalavalli Thayar in utsavam was indescribable as captured in the Srimad Ramayanam tribute "tulya shIla vayo vR^ittAM tulyAbhijana lakShaNAM rAghavo arhati vaidehIM tamcheyaM asItekShaNA" The procession was beyond compare with the Divya Dampatis decorated with dazzling ornaments. Sri Aravamudhan was bearing all His five weapons in a breathtaking alankaram. The pleasantness of His face defied description by mere words and His bewitching smile was of an inviting form with the message "Please come and enjoy this sevai". It caused everyone gathered to reflect that they had missed out on this unique sevai all these days/years. Sri Aravamudhan seemed to suggest that He was longing for the presence of these Bhagavatas and stood ready to shower His anugraham. The chains and gems adorning the lord's neck enhanced His beauty. The weapons too functioned as bhUShaNams (adorning ornaments) for Lord Aravamudhan rather than astrams. This is indicative of the fact that Lord Aravamudhan by His mere Sankalpam is able to destroy those inimically inclined towards His sharaNAgatas. He does not require His weapons for this purpose. Therefore, these functioned as ornaments for Him in this instance. The tirucheNDu reaching up to the Lord's ears seems to enquire "what is the next kaimkaryam to be rendered for You, oh Lord?" Thus, it was a most majestic sight for all! This experience is like a torrential flow that drowns all beholders who are simply mesmerized by the beauty of Lord Aravamudhan. However, this lasts only as long as one is viewing Lord Aravamudhan. The moment one sets their sights on SrI Komalavalli Thayar, it becomes apparent that that beauty of Thayar far exceeds that of Lord Aravamudhan. Thayar's demeanor seems to suggest "aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramam padam va" (I stand ready to grant you all manner of riches, Kaivalyam, and indeed Moksham too. However, all of this is insufficient for the great effort you have undertaken to come here. What more can I do for you?) It is this anxiety of Thayar that becomes apparent at a first look. Her facial expression seems to suggest "I have been waiting for your arrival for a long time. You have finally come. This gives Me great delight. Welcome aboard!" The mahans who had assembled and rendered Veda Parayanam had no desire for any sambhavanam, honors, or the like. Instead, their sole motto was to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam - the ultimate puruShArtham. The company of these mahans was elevating indeed! There were several aged mahans in this gathering including adiyen's revered father. The occasion was graced by H.H. the 46th pattam Azhagiyasingar. It may be borne in mind that Srimad Azhagiyasingar was quite exhausted by the demands of anushtanam. However, ignoring all of the bodily


May the flood of Daya-cascade of waves, immerse adiyen

strain, H.H. enthusiastically took part in the proceedings. Undoubtedly this was entirely due to the magnetic charm of the Divine Couple providing this most majestic sevai. The samarpaNam of honors to the Divine Couple, Svami NammAzhvar, Svami Tirumankai Azhvar, and Svami Desikan was a divine sight. Many of the assembled mahans remarked that this is indeed a sneak preview of the bounty that awaits us upon attaining nitya vasam in Sri Vaikuntam after Moksham. Another mahan remarked that the utsavam is so beautiful that there should be no evil eyes (drushti) that accrues to either Lord Aravamudhan or to the grand assembly of Bhagavatas devoutly engaged in kaimkaryam. The main reason for blessing the entire assembly with this astonishing sevai is the anugraham of Daya Devi. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, it is captured through the tribute "nimentare(a)pi mayi te vitatir yadi syAt" (namely despite my massive sin-pile, oh Daya Devi! You take pity and grant me this extraordinary anubhavam). In Tamil this is equivalent to a "muDavan aspiring for the kombu tEn" denoting the fact that even though one may be most undeserving of this benefit, one is granted this sevai in a most extraordinary manner. Adiyen thought of sharing this divine anubhavam with all listeners of this exposition. If Divya Prabandham is flourishing today, it is entirely due to the anugraham of Lord Aravamudhan to Sri Nathamuni Acharya. It is adiyen's prayer that all of you must be blessed with this sevai in person. For those who may not have an opportunity to experience this in person, adiyen hopes this narration will serve as a feast for your ears and enable you to visualize the grand sevai. Even though Svami Desikan is the recipient of the torrential flow of Daya Devi, he continues to appeal to Daya Devi in the next verse. There are two aspects to Lord Srinivasa. One of them is daNDa dharan (metes out consequences in accordance with one's karma). The other is to confer His grace on all comers. In this context, it is important to note the difference between Leela Karyam and Daya Karyam. The former pertains to Lord Srinivasa's role as daNDa dharan, while Daya Karyam applies to making the impossible realizable. The next verse is an impassioned appeal to Lord Srinivasa to give up His Leela Karyam as daNDa dharan and become entirely submissive to Daya Devi. In this context, it may appear superficially that the Lord's role as daNDa dharan applies equally to all beings. However, in the next verse, Svami Desikan declares it is not so. There is a difference between transgressions committed unknowingly and knowingly. The former is excused with a light warning at best. However, the latter entails serious consequences. This is due to the fact that when one is adept at the nuances of what needs to be done and what is forbidden but engages in prohibited acts while giving up prescribed acts with vicarious delight, the punishment meted out will also be



quite serious. However, Svami Desikan offers a prayerful request in the next Daya Satakam verse to be excused for transgressions committed knowingly. The verse is "vij~nAtashAsana gatirviparIta vR^ityA vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm" Hearing this, Svami Desikan anticipates that Daya Devi would definitely ask "Have you committed these sins knowingly or unknowingly?" Svami Desikan's pre-emptive strike so to speak is an apology for committing these sins knowingly. This is captured in the tribute "vij~nAtashAsana gatirviparIta vR^ityA". The latter usage in this tribute, "viparIta vR^ityA" refers to the fact that he is engaged in forbidden acts with great delight, while shamelessly giving up prescribed acts. For example, if the shastras declare "satyam vada" (speak only the truth), constantly uttering lies becomes a serious violation. Svami Desikan declares that as a result, his state of being is no different from that of the asura Vritra captured in the tribute "vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi". Svami Desikan continues "Even though I have sinned in this manner, I still come to You, oh Daya Devi, and submit this appeal, captured in the salutation "evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM". Such a sinner stands before You aware of the fact that he fully deserves the punishment through experience of so many narakams. However, if Lord Srinivasa decides to mete out this punishment, it will be impossible for me to withstand its intensity. Therefore, I humbly submit that Lord Srinivasa give up His Leela karyam as daNDa dharan and instead adopt the position of complete subservience to Daya Devi so that my sins are readily forgiven. This is my only hope. This is captured in the tribute "dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm". From the experience that adiyen had at the Tirukudandai Utsavam, it is a live demonstration that Daya Devi has brought about the task of transforming Lord Srinivasa from His position as daNDa dharan to that of unlimited compassion. The Tirukutantai sevai is an assurance from Daya Devi to us in the manner of "Do not fear. The Lord will not adopt the disposition of daNDa dharan towards you. I have instructed Him thus. He stands by My side to affirm this." Thus, with a prayerful submission to Daya Devi to grace all with this anugraham adiyen concludes the exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patracharìar Svamin:

"This is a figurative presentation. The flood of Daya-cascade of waves, can immerse me even when I am in an elevated position. It is a purificatory bath. My sins are washed off. The reference here is to post-prapatti sins. The transgressions would have disqualified me for deliverance. But then my prayers, my atonement,



my punaH prapatti would have pacified the Lord. As such when Daya immerses me in a moment of rising wave-cascade, it wins a smiling approval from Lord Srinivasa.

1. The presentation as is from a superficial examination may lead nirhetuka-daya-adherents to attempt to score a point. However, it must be remembered that the Daya flood is spontaneous. Whom it immerses, namely, those it deems qualified for liberation definitely depends on his definitive merits. If he is a Prapanna that has incurred buddhipUrvaka sins upon performance of Prapatti, he would necessarily have to be cleansed either through Prayaschitta or in the extreme case, performance of another punaH prapatti.

2. Any lingering doubts will be removed in the next verse.

3. Brahma Sutra 2.3.41 emphasizes that the Lord, Para Brahman awaits the effort made by the jiva (individual soul, sentient being), in order that injunctions and prohibitions may not become futile. Therefore, Daya is definitely not nirhetuka!”



Slokam 93

विज्ञातशासन गतिर्विपरीत वृत्या
वृत्रादिभिः परिचितां पदवीं भजामि ।
एवंविधे वृषगिरीश दये मयि त्वं
दीने विभोः शमय दण्ड धरत्व लीलाम् ॥९३

vij~nAtashAsana gatirviparIta vR^ityA
vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi|
evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM
dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm||93



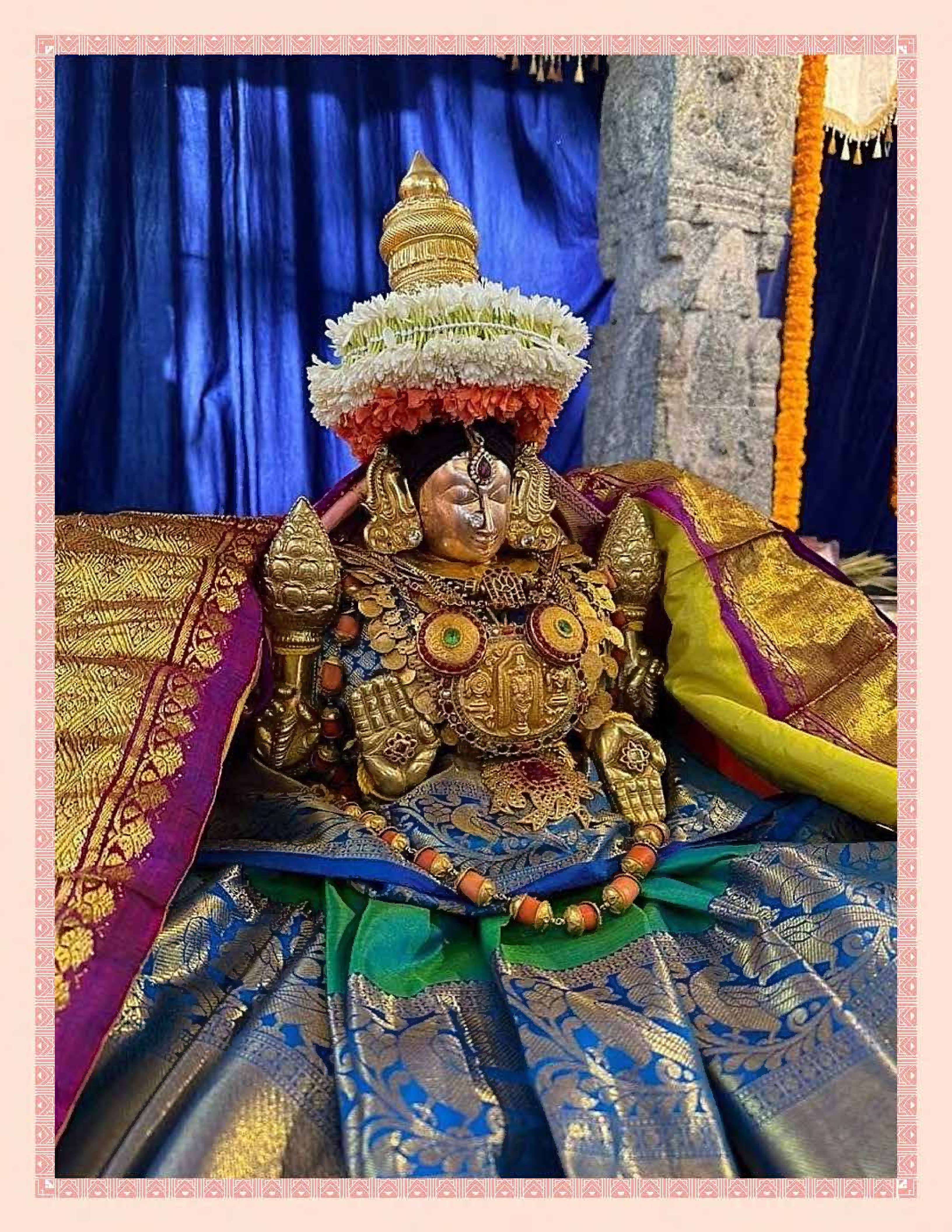
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri.U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The previous verse documented an impassioned appeal from Svami Desikan to be engulfed by the torrential Daya flow of Daya Devi, which knows no boundaries. Furthermore, this Daya flow needs to be in the form of a tsunami to destroy all sins, which are truly mountainous and render him (Svami Desikan, in reality us) fit for Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. So forceful is the flow that even Lord Srinivasa if He wanted to stop it would be powerless. Instead, He merely looks on in amazement at this extraordinary act of Daya Devi. This decad of verses is replete with numerous shastrArthams and insights. Documented herein is the pre and post-Prapatti code of conduct. In this instance, sharaNAgati for Lord Srinivasa has been undertaken and Svami Desikan commences the decad with the appeal "nAthe niveshaya" to be united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Thus, upon completion of the SharaNAgati, Svami Desikan provides an instruction in the post-Prapatti code of conduct. First and foremost, upon completion of Prapatti, one's thoughts and focus should be directed at efforts of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This is the ultimate puruShArtham. The added joy that comes about due to BhAgavata Kaimkaryam should also be the focus. In fact, this is the limit of one's Kaimkaryam. This is reflected in the SharaNAgati Dipika tribute "yunjAnacintya yuvarAja padaM bhajanti". The import of this tribute is that the Prapanna in due course will beget the kingship of Kaimkarya SAmrAjyam. The performance of Prapatti is a ceremony that coronates the Prapanna as the crown prince. Thus, in the remaining time that the Prapanna



has until the end of his earthly existence, he must be engaged only in thoughts of Bhagavad and BhAgavata Kaimkaryam.

In this verse, Svami Desikan elaborates on the consequences of sins committed knowingly upon performance of Prapatti. By way of background, in a prior verse, Svami Desikan has submitted the appeal of "nAthe niveshaya" to be united with the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi reasons "Indeed you have performed sharaNAgati and entrusted the burden of protecting you to Me. However, you still continue to engage in sinful acts after Prapatti, knowing fully well that these are forbidden. What are the consequences?" Svami Desikan infers this intent of Daya Devi and provides a beautiful answer. Specifically, Svami Desikan states that there is no annulment of Moksham. However, due to the sins committed post-Prapatti, there will be a lengthening of their life span to endure the consequences for these sins. This will result in a delay in gaining moksham. For example, if one is eighty years old and continues to engage in sinful acts upon performance of Prapatti, and does not take recourse to PrAyaschittam or in the extreme case punaH prapatti, it will result in their life span being lengthened by a few years. During this period, they may be deprived of Kaimkaryam opportunities. This would be a mechanism for enduring the consequences of these sins. In the extreme instance if the sins committed by the Prapanna after Prapatti are so grave, that the only recourse is narakam, Daya Devi still contemplates on a mechanism to grant them the parama puruShArtham of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. With a great deal of trepidation, Svami Desikan submits his prayerful appeal in this Daya Satakam verse, that even though a number of grave post-Prapatti offenses have been committed, due to his helpless state, Daya Devi must not hold this against him. For that matter Lord Srinivasa should also not use this as an exclusion criterion and deny Moksham. This is the import of this verse. This verse is "vij~nAtashAsana gatirviparIta vR^ityA vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm" (Oh Daya Devi! I completely agree with all the points You have raised. I am not an ignoramus. Due to the grace of my Acharyas, I am well versed with the Shastras.) The definition of Shastram is "shAsanAt trAyate iti" (that which provides instruction. This must be understood in the context of being the commands of Lord Narayana.) These instructions are in the form of aj~nA kaimkaryam and anuj~nA kaimkaryam, which must necessarily be followed. How does this become known? It is from the sastram itself. Thus, the salutation "vij~nAtashAsana gatiH" has the meaning that not only is Svami Desikan intimately familiar with the Sastras as the command of Lord Narayana, he is also well aware of its practice by way of rules and



regulations. For example, a new law was passed that requires all riders of two wheelers to wear a helmet. Violators of this law will be detained and fined. Now if a violator is confronted by law enforcement and is asked to pay the fine, the violator cannot feign ignorance of the law. This is an act that is undertaken knowing fully well the consequences. In a like manner, Lord Narayana has documented through the shastras the acts that are prescribed and forbidden. Knowing this fully well, I am engaged in "viparIta vR^ityA". That is there is a difference between knowingly engaging in a sinful act and engaging in a sinful act blissfully unaware of its consequences. Let's say if one crushes a bug in one's sleep or if one inadvertently steps on an insect while walking, these do not count as buddhi-pUrvaka pApam. The shastras declare that these do not accrue any consequences for a Prapanna. Then come the acts that are engaged in without realizing that they are sinful. Do these bear any consequences? In this context, adiyen narrates an instance that took place a few years ago. Adiyen visited a temple in Chennai on Vaikunta Ekadasi day to offer prostration to Lord Narayana. A large crowd had assembled in order to gain a darsanam. It was delightful to see astikas throng in large numbers on this day. There was one Bhagavata attired in svarUpam (12 Tiruman and Pancha Kaccham). He wished to make a monetary contribution, for which he reached into his bag. The bag had a zip, which needed to be closed. In order to use both hands for this purpose, he placed the money in his mouth. After closing the zip, he then removed the money from his mouth and submitted it to Lord Narayana. Adiyen was greatly perturbed upon beholding this. The saliva from his mouth had defiled the offering to Lord Narayana. All others gathered there turned a blind eye to this act and did not utter a word. As far as this Bhagavata was concerned, he was a great Astika. On this auspicious day, he came to seek a darsanam of Lord Narayana and submit something by way of offering - in this instance money. He was blissfully unaware of the fact that that his saliva had contaminated the money offering and that this was a wrongful act. Such an act committed knowingly or unknowingly incurs consequences even if committed with blissful unawareness that this is wrong. If one engaged in this act knowingly, the consequences are more severe than when one engages in this act unknowingly (unaware that it is a sin). While this Svami was performing pradakshiNam, adiyen gently reminded him that his submission of the saliva laden money to the Lord was a wrongful act and advised him not to engage in this act again. He was extremely contrite and apologetic. He mentioned that due to his circumstances, he was not cognizant of these norms and hence requested forgiveness with a promise to never repeat this. Since he engaged in this act unaware of the fact that it was wrong, the consequences are less severe.



Nevertheless, it must be noted that merely being unaware that an act is wrongful and engaging in it does not render it right. It definitely comes with consequences. Now if the same act was engaged in by someone with full awareness that it was wrong, the punishment that comes about is quite severe. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan declares that he is intimately familiar with the shastras. Furthermore, after understanding their purport fully, he has undertaken the performance of SharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Even so, Svami Desikan terms his post-Prapatti actions as "viparIta vR^ityA" (kR^itya akaraNam and akR^itya karaNam, namely gleefully giving up prescribed acts and engaging in forbidden acts with vicarious delight.) This is the manner of violating the shastras. Moreover, adiyen is fully aware that such violations are worthy of serious punishment. Daya Devi seems to enquire here "You have mastered the shastras and understood their purport. After this you have performed sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa. Furthermore, knowing fully well the consequences of engaging in sinful acts, you continue to indulge in them after Prapatti. How then do you expect Me to redeem you?" Svami Desikan submits his reply "Indeed Oh Mother Daya Devi! Everything You say is absolutely true. Without Your intervention if adiyen stood before Lord Srinivasa, it would be a straightforward case to put on the dock and mete out appropriate punishment." This is captured in the tribute "vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi" of this Daya Satakam verse reflecting the fact that the punishment would be akin to the state of asuras such as Vritra. It is commonly known that Vritrasura was killed by Indra. This is documented in the Vedam. This is also documented in the sixth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam. There was a rishi named TvaShTa. His son was VishvarUpa. "vishvarUpovai tvAShTaH" is the Vedam tribute that documents this fact. For a while, Vishvarupa was anointed as the Bruhaspati for the Devas. He was formally requested to serve as the Purohita for the Devas. Since Vishvarupa had his adhyayanam with Shukracharya, the guru of the Asuras, he used his siddhis to retrieve the wealth of the devas that had been hidden by the asuras. This Vidya known as Vaishnava was passed on as instruction by Vishvarupa to Indra, on account of which Indra regained his lost wealth. Vishvarupa was endowed with three heads. Over time, he began to engage in flawed practices. Normally, when a yAgam is performed the havis needs to be distributed only to the appropriate devatas. However, while performing yAgams, Vishvarupa in addition to submitting havis to the Devatas, also submitted havis for asuras in a concealed manner. Additionally, Vishvarupa had distinguished himself on account of his Tapas. Such was the power of his tapas, that he even desired the position of Indra himself. It is well known that Indra cannot tolerate any competition for his position



and is quite ruthless about exterminating the competitors. Indra discerned the intention of Vishvarupa and using his VajrAyudha, Indra severed the three heads of Vishvarupa. This act greatly angered, TvaShTa. It must be noted that even though Vishvarupa had erred greatly and was deserving of punishment, TvaShTa was overcome by grief due to the loss of his son. Unable to bear this, and identifying Indra as the cause of his grief, TvaShTa undertook the performance of a yAgam to ensure the destruction of Indra. Thus, the yAgam of TvaShTa was intended to create one that would kill Indra in accordance with the Vedam Rk “indrashatro vivardhasva.” Here is where Lord Narayana came to the rescue of Indra who had sought refuge in Him. It must be remembered that Lord Narayana is known for His sworn position of protecting those who have sought refuge in Him. This was brought about by TvaShTa missing the svaram for reciting the Vedam Rk. This instead, reversed the purport of the Rk to mean “may the being arising from the yAgam be killed by Indra”. This is documented in the Vedam Rk “yatendra shatru svaratoparodha”. The important message here is that when performing karmanushtanam, due attention must be paid to the svaram and the Vedam Rks should be rendered properly. This is particularly important for upayanadhi and shrAddham rites. Even the Purohitar performing the rite must perform this with great attention to detail and with a sense of fear to not slip up. Once the Rk was uttered by TvaShTa, a fierce asura named Vritra emerged from the sacrificial fire. Since the Rk was uttered with altered svaram by TvaShTa, instead of one born to kill Indra, the asura that emerged from the sacrifice was destined to be killed by Indra. This Vritra had a gigantic, fierce form which would instill fear in anyone that saw him. The Maharishis and Sadhus who beheld this sight were petrified and ran for safety. Vritra was so strong that no ordinary weapons could destroy him. The Maharishis, Devas, and Sadhus submitted a prayer to Lord Narayana. Lord Narayana appeared before them and assured them that there is a Rishi named dadhyan, who has undertaken great penance with every moment of his life engaged in dhyanam of Lord Narayana. Thus, his entire body is fortified on account of this Tapas. Now if he is requested to shed his mortal coils and his bones are used to create a weapon, it will definitely destroy Vritra. The Sadhus, Maharishis, and Devas submitted their appeal to Rishi Dadhyan. Realizing that this is the only route for ridding the world of the menace of Vritra, Dadhyan perceived this to be the command of Lord Narayana and shed his mortal coils with the most noble thoughts of SarvabhUta Daya to allow the creation of this weapon for destroying Vritra. A fierce battle ensued between Indra and Vritra. So intense was their fight that the Devas went scurrying for cover. So too did Asuras like Sambara and Namuchi. When



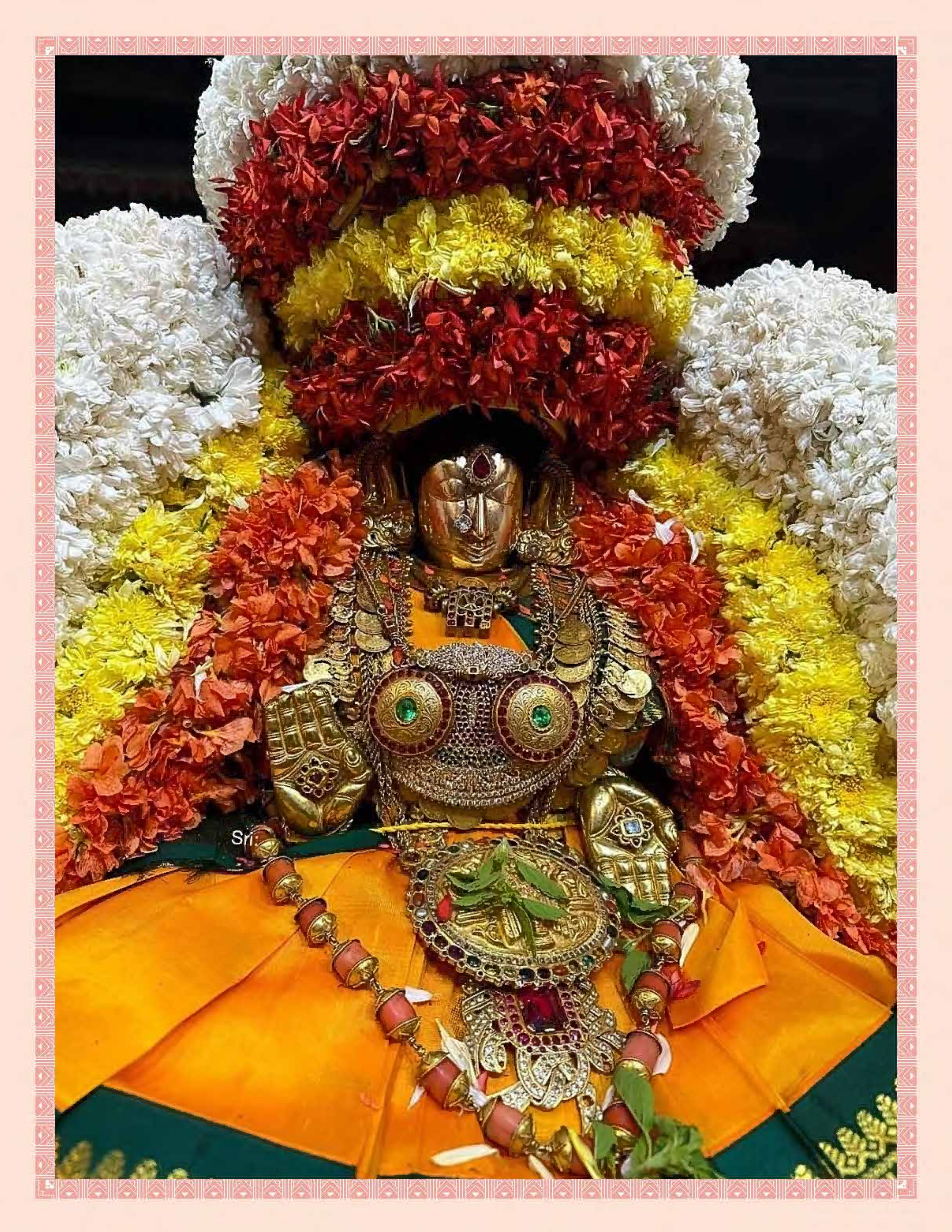
the battle reached a critical point, Vritra addressed Indra "I have been waiting for this moment. To the outside world it may appear that a fierce fight is ensuing between us. However, in reality I have trained my thoughts on Lord Narayana and am waiting for Him to nourish me in the manner of a mother bird offering food for her babies who do not have wings. Therefore, without further delay please use the weapon prepared from the bones of Rishi Dadhyan, and rid me of my suffering. Thereby, I shall gain emancipation and the benefit of Kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. This is my intense desire. Therefore, please use this weapon against me without delay." Those who heard the words of Vritra were astonished by the fact that this fierce rakshasa had such noble thoughts. This also reminds us of an instance from the Mahabharata war. In ten days of the war, Bhishma was formidable and could not be defeated. Lord Krishna Himself castigated Arjuna for not fighting with the full extent of his might out of respect for Bhishma as his Acharya and grandfather. Arjuna responded to Lord Krishna with the statement that it is not true that he was not exercising his full might to fight with Bhishma. Instead, Bhishma was so strong that nobody could defeat him. Lord Krishna then addresses Arjuna "You are incapable of destroying Bhishma. I, who have sworn not to take up any arms in this war, will use My Sudarshana Chakram and finish off Bhishma in an instant. You just watch." Bhishma was overjoyed to see Lord Krishna advancing towards him with Chakram in hand and addressed Lord Krishna with folded hands "ehi ehi pullAkSha padma netra" (Oh Lotus-eyed one! I have been waiting for this moment. There can be nobody more fortunate than me to meet my end at Yyour hands with the Chakram. Please come and rid me of this bondage.) However, there is a difference between Bhishma and Vritra. The outpouring of Bhishma was heartfelt as a Bhakti yogi. Whereas Vritra's address was intended to distract Indra into believing that the former's Bhakti for Lord Narayana was so great and thereby ensure that Vritra could easily destroy Indra. In fact, when Indra was mesmerized by the tone of Vritra's address, Vritra assumed a gigantic form and devoured Indra along with his elephant, AirAvata. Thus, there was an inconsistency between the thought and deed for Vritra. With great difficulty, Indra was able to tear through the bowels of Vritra and subsequently destroy him. It is instructive to note from the VritthAntham of Vritra that he knowingly engaged in sinful behavior. This is captured in the tribute "vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi" of this Daya Satakam verse. (My state is similar to Vritrasura. I have submitted that I am incapable of following the prescriptions of Karma Yoga, j~nAna Yoga, and Bhakti Yoga. You need to stand in their stead and grace me with the same benefit that accrues to the practitioners of Bhakti Yogam. Thus, expressing my



Akincanyatvam, I have performed sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa. However, upon performance of SharaNAgati, I have acted in a manner contrary to what is expected of me. Thus, my sharaNAgati is no different from the words of Vritra, who claimed to have singular focus on the feet of Lord Narayana. The tribute "viparIta vR^ityA" from this Daya Satakam verse completes the analogy to Vritra in that post-Prapatti actions are similar to Vritra devouring Indra. Thus, the appropriate punishment in my case is a figurative killing which is denial of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam.This is even worse than the killing of Vritra.) SvAmi Alavandar in the Stotra Ratnam states "na ninditaM karma tadasti lOkE sahasrasho yanna mayA vyadhAyi so(a)haM vipAkAvasare mukunda krandAmi sampratyagatistavAgre" (All that is incorrect, I have engaged in - not once or twice but thousands of times. The major drawback is that I do not even realize the error of my ways, which only causes further indulgence in the sinful path. If one is punished instantaneously for one's sins, one will never engage in the act. This is in the manner of one staying away from the fire knowing fully well that it burns. However, for our sins the consequences are not immediate. It is not known when the punishment will come about. This comes about at an appropriate time. Only then do the associated troubles with the sinful act manifest. At that time, it causes us to infer that due to a sinful act committed a long time ago we are enduring its consequences. Svami Alavandar declares in this verse that due to the consequences of the sinful acts not manifesting immediately he continued to indulge in them. At that time I was perhaps enjoying the fruits of some good karma, which rendered me blissfully ignorant to the consequences of the sinful acts. This caused me to become an egregious offender. Now the time has come to pay the price for the sinful acts. When I am reaping the effects of these sins, I have none to turn to for protection. Therefore, I fall at Your feet and implore that You protect me. This is the same sentiment captured in the tribute "vij~nAtashAsana gatirviparIta vR^ityA vR^itrAdibhiH parichitAM padavIM bhajAmi" of this Daya Satakam verse. In the AtimAnusha Sthavam verse, Sri Kuresha declares "adyApi nAstyuparatiH trividhApacArAt pApa: pare nipatito(a)smi tamasyapAre etAdR^isho(a)hamagatirbhavato dayAyAH pAtraM tvadIyacaraNau sharaNaM prapadye" - "I am constantly engaged in Bhagavad, BhAgavata, and asahya apachAram with no end in sight. The consequence is that I am steeped in sin, resulting in an all-enveloping darkness from which there is no light. There is no question of redemption for me due to these actions. Nobody can help me. However, despite this I perform my surrender to You, Oh Lord! Thereby although I am most undeserving, I become a receptacle for Your Daya." It must be remembered here that Sri Kuresha is blemishless. However, he takes on the plight



of a commoner to express the struggle that they face. In this instance it must be remembered that when a hungry one arrives at our door seeking a meal, feeding him sumptuously is an act of Daya. However, if someone well known to us visits and has already partaken of a meal, forcing him to eat is not an act of Daya. In a like manner, gracing one who has accumulated a lot of pious acts is no big deal. Redeeming one steeped in sin and making them the receptacle of Daya is the real act of compassion. This is my state declares Sri Kuresha. However, due to the Daya of the Lord, He assures us that we will be graced. Following the lead of Sri Kuresha, Svami Desikan declares in this Daya Satakam verse "evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm" (Even though I have sinned greatly and knowingly, I shudder to think of the consequences when I helplessly stand before Lord Srinivasa. There is no other option except punishment. However, Oh Daya Devi, I guarantee that I shall not be able to withstand the punishment. Therefore, Oh Mother You need to interfere on my behalf and ensure that Lord Srinivasa gives up His Leela Karyam of daNDa dharatvam and adopts a disposition of subservience to You. This is the only way for my redemption. Lord Srinivasa is bereft of vaiShamya naigraNyam. Namely He does not display selective partiality. He is an impartial dispenser of justice in accordance with the rule book of the Shastras. Good acts are rewarded and sins are punished. It must be remembered that Lord Srinivasa engages in this role of daNDa dharatvam as an act of sport. This is His Leela Karyam. Since this is an act of sport, this can be given up. There is nothing wrong with this position. For example, one may be engaged in sport. However, this has to necessarily stop when it starts raining. Similarly, there could be other reasons to disrupt the act of sport. Therefore, Oh Daya Devi! if You make the appeal on my behalf, Lord Srinivasa will desist from this act of sport. You alone are capable of accomplishing this. Therefore, I submit this appeal to You. It is important to note that this verse has a few shastrArthams embedded in it. First off, all Prapannas are freed from the clutches of Yama. Thus, they are guaranteed to not endure the resulting narakas. The prapatti for Moksham is never rendered futile. For those who engage in buddhi-pUrvaka (knowingly committed) sins upon performance of Prapatti, the issue is what are the consequences? This is expounded upon here. To rid oneself of the consequences of these sins, one must perform a prAyashcitta prapatti. However, for one who is guaranteed to engage in sinful acts following prAyashcitta prapatti, what is the recourse? The Shastras afford a long rope. However, despite this allowance we engage in egregious violations. This is analogous to an insurance agent laying out the limitations and exclusion conditions for coverage of medical insurance being confronted with the


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question "I do not care what you say. As long as I present you with the bill as per your requirements will I be covered under this medical insurance?" This is totally unacceptable. First off, you are ineligible for coverage. However, out of compassion if this is offered under some restrictions, instead of complying with them, the question being asked is absolutely inappropriate. Therefore, you are deemed ineligible for coverage. In a like manner, the shastras allow considerable leeway so that one can conform to them and lead a life on the right path. However, despite this latitude, our behavior is one of egregious violation of the shastras. The punaH prapatti is intended to serve as a mechanism to rid oneself of sins arising from post-prapatti sins committed knowingly. If this is not resorted to, Lord Srinivasa administers some light punishment within the Prapanna's lifetime so that the effects of these post-prapatti sinful acts are completely expended. This is akin to one being fit for punishment by beheading with a spear, is instead poked by thorns. This is the manner of administering light punishment and ensuring that the Prapanna begets moksham at the end of their life. Here Svami Desikan submits that it would be impossible for him to bear even the light punishment. Therefore, he requests Daya Devi to ensure that even the light punishment does not come about. This is the import of the salutation "evaM vidhe vR^iShagirIsha daye mayi tvaM dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDa dharatva lIlAm" of this Daya Satakam verse. This nugget from the shastras is hard to comprehend even for those who have undergone extensive kalakshepam of Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram. It is Daya Devi's utmost desire that these shastrArthams be captured through the words of Svami Desikan in the Daya Satakam. Therefore, She engages in a samvadam (tete-e-tete) with Svami Desikan in an attempt to evoke a response from Svami Desikan. This is in the manner of the Srimad Bhagavatam salutation "nigama kalpataroH gaLitaM phalaM shukamukhAd" The luscious fruit in the tree are usually picked by parrots. This indicates the fruit must be good since the parrot discards the poor-quality fruit. In this instance, the creeper known as the Vedas yields delicious fruits. These were partaken of by Shuka Maharishi in the form of a parrot and its essence is distributed for our consumption by Shuka Maharishi as per the declaration "pibata bhAgavataM rasamAlayaM muhuraho rasikA bhuvi bhAvukAH" In a like manner, Daya Devi desires the parrot known as ThUppul KulamaNi (Svami Desikan), should exposit on the intricate meanings of the shastras through his stotrams and hence decides to engage in this sambhaShaNam. For the next verse, Daya Devi posits a loaded question to Svami Desikan. She states "Oh Swami! You are well versed in the shastras, their nuances and practice. Furthermore, you exposit on these to your followers and instruct them in the intricate meanings of Prapatti Shastram.



Knowing all of this, you have performed surrender. How then do you account for your post-prapatti transgressions? Are you not engaging in fraudulent practice?" Svami Desikan's reply is captured in the next verse, which is "mAsAhasokti ghanakancukavancitAnyaH pashyatsu teShu vidhadhAmyati sAhasAni padmA sahAya karuNe na ruNatsi kiM tvaM ghoraM kuLi~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me"

The tribute "mAsAhasokti ghanakancukavancitAnyaH" is Svami Desikan's admission of guilt that he is defrauding everyone in the universe. The salutation "pashyatsu teShu vidhadhAmyati sAhasAni" indicates that in full view of the universe, Svami Desikan engages in most eloquent shastraic exposition. However, his practice is exactly the opposite of what he exposits. This is the manner of defrauding the entire universe. For example, I go to great lengths to drive home the point that those who do not perform sandhyavandanam have great punishment in store. They instantly incur the displeasure of Lord Narayana. This is an "Aj~nA kaimkaryam" (Lord Narayana's command) which must definitely be followed. The Aj~nA kaimkaryam is meant entirely for gaining the grace of Lord Narayana. Thus, one who gives up Aj~nA kaimkaryam incurs the displeasure of Lord Narayana. The second kind of Kaimkaryam is anuj~nA kaimkaryam. This includes lighting lamps at the temple of Lord Narayana, offering garlands for adorning Lord Narayana, submitting varieties of delicacies by way of Neivedyam and the like. These kaimkaryams are optional in nature. Performance of these kaimkaryams for a specific purpose, yields the desired results. However, non-performance of these kaimkaryams does not incur the displeasure of Lord Narayana. Not only that, but we must also be extremely careful not to incur BhAgavata apachAram. These are aspects that I have expounded upon in painstaking detail. While this has been for public consumption, in their full view, I do not conform to even a single instruction that I have provided for them. The salutation "padmA sahAya karuNe" addresses Daya Devi as one who is associated with Padma (Mahalakshmi Thayar), who assists Lord Narayana in the task of protection of errant baddha jivans. Through my words I have incurred the vAncitam of the entire universe. However, when they scrutinize my actions, I fall way short in that, my practice is in direct violation of everything that I have preached. This is captured in the tribute "pashyatsu teShu vidhadhAmyati sAhasAni" which denotes that Svami Desikan's actions arise out of extreme bravado. These actions are in the manner of the tribute "ghoraM kuLi~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me." There is a bird known as KuLinga, which makes loud noise and offers instructions, such as "Do not go there. Danger awaits. Someone is bent on luring you into the wrong path to ensure your ruin." However, the Kulinga bird has a fondness for elephant meat sticking to the teeth of a lion that has just

feasted on its kill. When the lion yawns in an act of fatigue and opens its mouth, the Kulinga bird in an instant rushed to pick apart with its beak the piece of elephant meat sticking to the lion's teeth. The bird, while instructing others not to engage in daring acts does exactly what it forbids. Thus, my state is exactly that of the Kulinga bird laments Svami Desikan. Even though I engage in this act quite egregiously, due to my SharaNAgati to You, Oh Daya Devi, it becomes Your responsibility to stop me from this endeavor. This is the import of this verse. The underlying message is that even though we are engaged in the most heinous acts of sin following our Prapatti, that which assures our protection is the Daya of Lord Srinivasa. On this note adiyen seeks the kataksham of Daya Devi for all listeners of this upanyasam and completes the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Even after passing through the Prapatti purification step, many - most even, incur deliberate violations of the Lord's mandates about Do's and Don't's. Who? What type of persons? Even very learned and dependable scholars! This is a curse. Such violators may even be designated as pseudo-prapannas. If one reflects upon oneself, it is apparent that this designation is befitting for most of us. Let that be so, declares Swami. In reality, we need to say this not him.

How do I use my perfect knowledge regarding the Shastras. I commit all acts that are forbidden therein. If this is is not bad enough, I gleefully avoid the mandatory duties laid out in the Shastras. Thus, my knowledge has only encouraged me to follow the path of Vritra, Hiranya, Ravana, and the like. What is my spirit? Utter contempt for the codes of conduct. I do this with utmost dedication! Fie upon me!

Notwithstanding such behavior, Oh Daya Devi! My mother! pray take pity on me in the manner of a mother would on Her dull-headed, dim-witted, knowledge-blind, pitiable baby and pacify the Lord so that He does not wield His punishment rod as He is known to for correcting errant children."



Slokam 94

मा साहसोक्ति घनकञ्चुक वञ्चितान्यः

पश्यत्सु तेषु विदधाम्यतिसाहसानि ।

पद्मासहायकरुणे न रुणत्सि किं त्वं

घोरं कुलिङ्ग शकुनेरिव चेष्टितं मे ॥९४ ॥

mA sAhasokti ghana ka~ncuka va~ncitAnyaH

pashyatsu teShu vidadhAmyati sAhasAni|

padmA sahAya karuNe na ruNatsi kiM tvaM

ghoraM kuli~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me||94



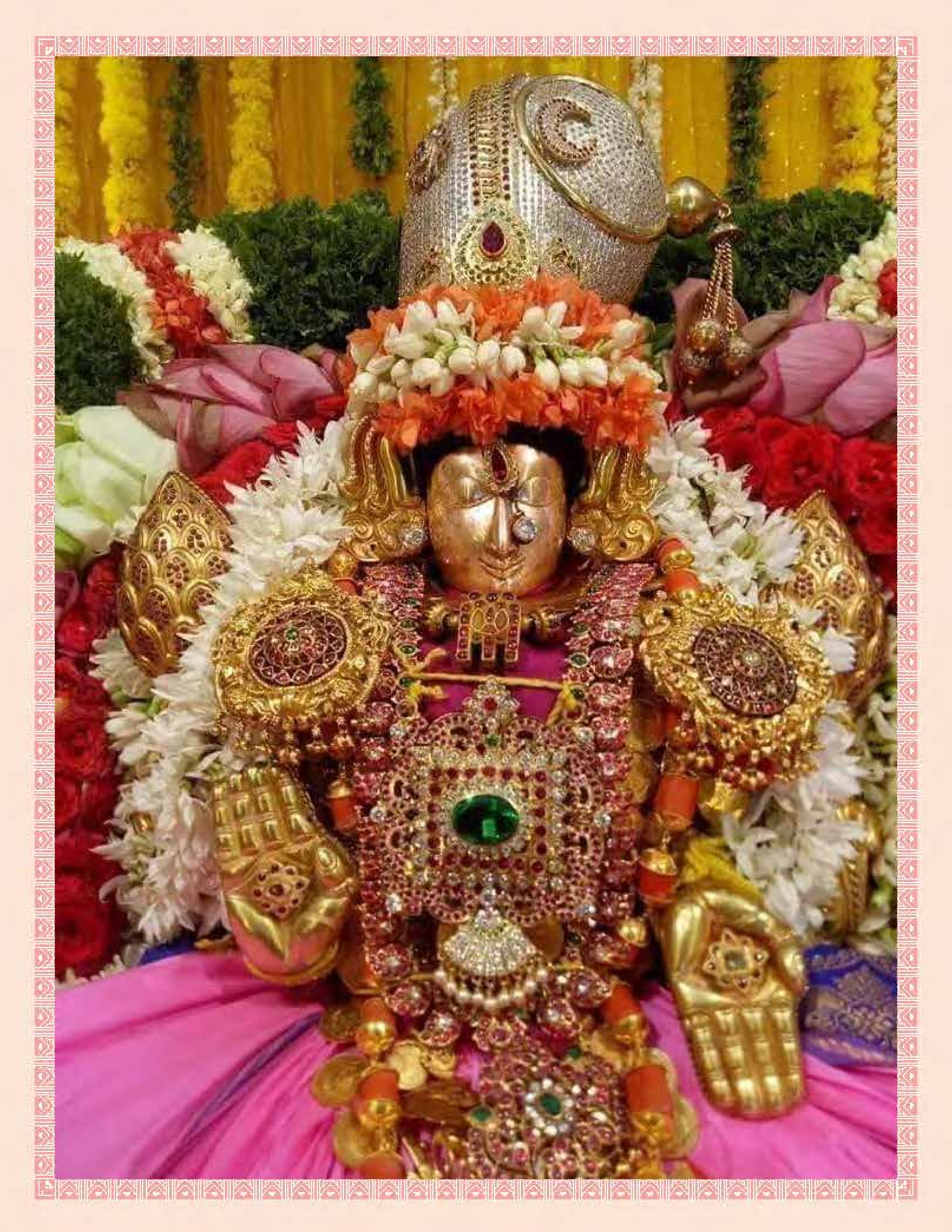
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We began the exposition of verse 94 earlier. In the previous verse Svami Desikan submitted the prayerful appeal "dIne vibhoH shamaya daNDadharatvalIlAm" (meting out punishment for sins is an act of sport for Lord Srinivasa. However, Oh Daya Devi You need to cause Him to desist from this act). Also, the difference in the degree of punishment meted out for acts knowingly engaged in and those committed without knowing that they were sinful was exposited upon. Svami Desikan even admitted that he is well versed in the shastras and has thus engaged in shastraic violations knowingly. Even so, he submits an appeal to Daya Devi to save him from punishment from Lord Srinivasa carried out as an act of sport. Ravana was well versed in the Sama Vedam. His command of Sanskrit grammar (vyAkaraNam) was unparalleled. Despite his lofty credentials and scholarship, he engaged in the most despicable act of separating Sita Devi from Lord Rama. Since this act was committed knowingly, the punishment for Ravana would greatly exceed that for others. Svami Desikan's appeal to Daya Devi was that his state is comparable to that of Ravana in that he knowingly engages in sinful acts post-Prapatti. Therefore, he requests that She intervene on his behalf and save him from punishment from Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi enquires by way of a prelude to this verse "Oh Svami! You instruct unskilled ones in the nuances of the shastras. You are extremely learned when it comes to these shastras. You have also performed a sharaNagati to Lord Srinivasa. Now we are focusing on post-Prapatti sins. For those

sins committed unknowingly, there is no penalty. Only the sins that are engaged in knowingly bear consequences. You have also submitted a Prayaschitta Prapatti (PunaH Prapatti) to destroy the effects of sins accrued to knowingly engaging in forbidden acts. Even after this you do not cease to engage in sinful acts. How then can the Lord be expected to exhibit a favorable disposition towards you? I too am baffled by your actions." An analogy is useful here. A mother instructs her child not to engage in certain acts, since they greatly anger the child's father. The child agrees to desist from these acts. When the father arrives, the mother mentions to him that she has advised the child not to engage in acts which anger his father and that the child has agreed. The father most compassionately remarks that he has excused the child's actions this one time. However, future violations will definitely incur punishment. After a few days the child again engages in the forbidden acts and arrives at his mother's side. The mother enquires "I advised you previously to desist from these acts since they greatly anger your father. You promised not to engage in them. Yet, you engage in the very same acts and stand before me? How do you expect me to intervene on your behalf and gain the good graces of your father?" The enquiry of Daya Devi is very much in keeping with the spirit of the discussion between the mother and her child. Svami Desikan states that Daya Devi's observations are spot on. Furthermore, he attests to the fact that he proudly proclaims to engage in these kind of forbidden acts. This verse is "mA sAhasokti ghana ka~ncuka va~ncitAnyaH pashyatsu teShu vidadhAmyati sAhasAni padmA sahAya karuNe na ruNatsi kiM tvaM ghoraM kuli~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me." Despite my instruction to all about staying away from these forbidden acts, I engage in them due to some compelling force. I even advise all my followers that this is a dangerous task and must not be engaged in. However, when it comes to my own practice, I do exactly the opposite of what I preach. In fact, I engage in these acts in full view of those that I instruct to desist from these actions. This is like the subhAhita vAkyam "paropadeshe pANDityam", indicating that great scholars eloquently preach the do's and don'ts. However, when it comes to their own practice, the scholarship is missing in action. For example, "tAra sandhyAmupAsita" is a common instruction for Brahmacharis with respect to the performance of Sandhyavananam. Typically, the thread ceremony (upanayanam) is celebrated with great pomp in the presence of a large gathering of guests. After everyone has been sumptuously fed, it is time for the Madhyahnikam. Everyone would have blessed the Brahmachari earlier, but when it comes time for the Madhyahnikam, there is typically nobody available to help the Brahmachari with this rite. The purpose of the upanayanam is not to have the grand feast with a large

gathering, but intended to foster the practice of Trikala Sandhya so that the Brahmachari becomes eligible for Veda adhyayanam. Even the Bruhaspati who performed the upanayanam would depart after instructing the Brahmachari to perform the Trikala sandya. However, the travails in getting the Brahmachari to first memorize all the Sandhya Vandana mantrams and engage in the prescribed acts of offering arghyam and the like are non-trivial. If the Brahmachari does not adopt the practice of Trikala Sandhyavandanam, the performance of the upanayanam becomes a wasted effort. Typically, when young Brahmacharis prostrate before elders and Acharya, it is customary for the latter to enquire "do you do the Trikala Sandhya?" If the Brahmachari answers in the affirmative, they would then ask him to recite the upasthana mantrams for the three Sandhyas. This was a routine practice adopted by H.H. Srimad Paravakottai Andavan Swami. Any gruhastha shishyas that visited his Ashramam would routinely be asked the question if they performed the Trikala Sandhya. If they answered that they do this once or twice, H.H. would advise them that the sacred duty of Trikala Sandhya should never be given up or compromised upon. Only upon being assured of their conformance to this act would H.H. administer SamashrayaNam and Bharanyasam. Thus, this is an Aj~nA kaimkaryam, which must necessarily be performed. Non-performance accrues sins. This may be true of commoners. However, when one arrives in full svarUpam, it is usual to ask if they perform Trikala Sandhyavandanam. The idea is that when someone is so full of Bhakti that they are in full svarUpam, they would necessarily uphold the basic demands of anushtanam. However, what if one such individual fails to perform the basic anushtanam? This analogy sets the stage perfectly for this Daya Satakam verse. Thus, if one is in svarUpam and eloquently preaches that performance of Sandhyavandanam is mandatory, but in full view of his followers does not perform Sandhyavandanam, what would be his state? If one constantly preaches that these are forbidden acts, therefore do not engage in them, however when it comes to practice, the one that preaches engages with vicarious delight in the very acts that he advises others to refrain from, how could he become privy to the grace of Lord Srinivasa? Svami NammAzhvar in the opening verse of fifth decad of TiruvAimozhi 5.1 declares, "kaiyAr cakkarattu en karu mANikkamE enRenRu poyyE kaimmai solli puRamE puRamE ADi meyyE peRRozhintEn viti vAykkinRu kAppArAr aiyO kaNNa pirAn aRaiyO ini pOnAlE" denotes the fact that the Lord just by Himself is indescribably beautiful. However, when holding the dazzling Sudarshana Chakram, His beauty is enhanced several fold. Even in the former case, one performs the hArati by way of removal of drushTi. What to speak of the latter? If one observes at the Sannadhi of Aravamudan, the

tiruvAzhi tirucanku (Conch)is seen leaning towards His ears. In other places it seen to be slightly away. The mangalasAsanam of great Mahans for Aravamudhan glorifies the conch near His ear as whispering to the Lord to command to accomplish any task for Him. When one prostrates before the murti as described by Svami NammAzhvar, one can continue to speak endlessly about the captivating beauty of Lord Narayana. Just imagine a learned scholar expositing on these aspects quite eloquently. If such an individual engages in "poiyE kaimmai solli puRamE puRamE ADi" (All of this is meant for public consumption. However, when it comes to his own turn to prostrate before Lord Narayana, there is absolutely no Bhakti worth the name on display. This is definitely fraudulent practice.) In a like fashion, Svami Desikan declares in this Daya Satakam verse that he has taken great pains to glorify Daya Devi, highlight Her elevated role in ensuring that all Her children beget the grace of Lord Srinivasa, and document in great detail Her numerous acts of help to beings of the universe. However, when it comes to his own practice, Svami Desikan in a mood of naichyam (self-deprecation) declares that he is bereft of all Bhakti towards Daya Devi. Svami NammAzhvar goes a step further and states that he is simply mesmerized by the exposition of even a vile sinner (who does not follow a single word of what he preaches) and develops an intense liking for Lord Narayana. For commoners like us, we may attend an upanyasam/kalakshepam where we may hear a greatly moving exposition on the greatness of Lord Narayana and resolve that the time we have on this earth is limited and thus let us engage in Bhagavad Dhyanam and Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. However, upon returning home a riveting action of cricket on tv consumes our attention. In the tribute "meyyE peRRozhintEn viti vAykkinRu kAppArAr aiyO kaNNa pirAn aRaiyO ini pOnAlE", Svami NammAzhvar further declares "I too fake the sense of Bhakti towards You. However, instead of restricting Your grace to those who have true Bhakti for You, You accept even fraudulent demonstrations of Bhakti from someone like me." This is akin to an upanyasakar expositng with great Bhakti on the greatness of the works of Svami NammAzhvar and Svami Desikan and upon conclusion of the upanyasam referring to these works in casual terms without the slightest prathibhakti. The import of Svami NammAzhvar's tribute needs to be understood in the context that even if one fakes Bhakti towards Lord Narayana, the Lord knowing this fully well does not hesitate to grace the individual. The individual's expression of Bhakti may be fraudulent. However, the anugraham of Lord Narayana is always real. "Nobody can stop the limitless flow of Your anugraham." Returning to the exposition of this Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan acknowledges that every word uttered by Daya Devi is true. "I have been

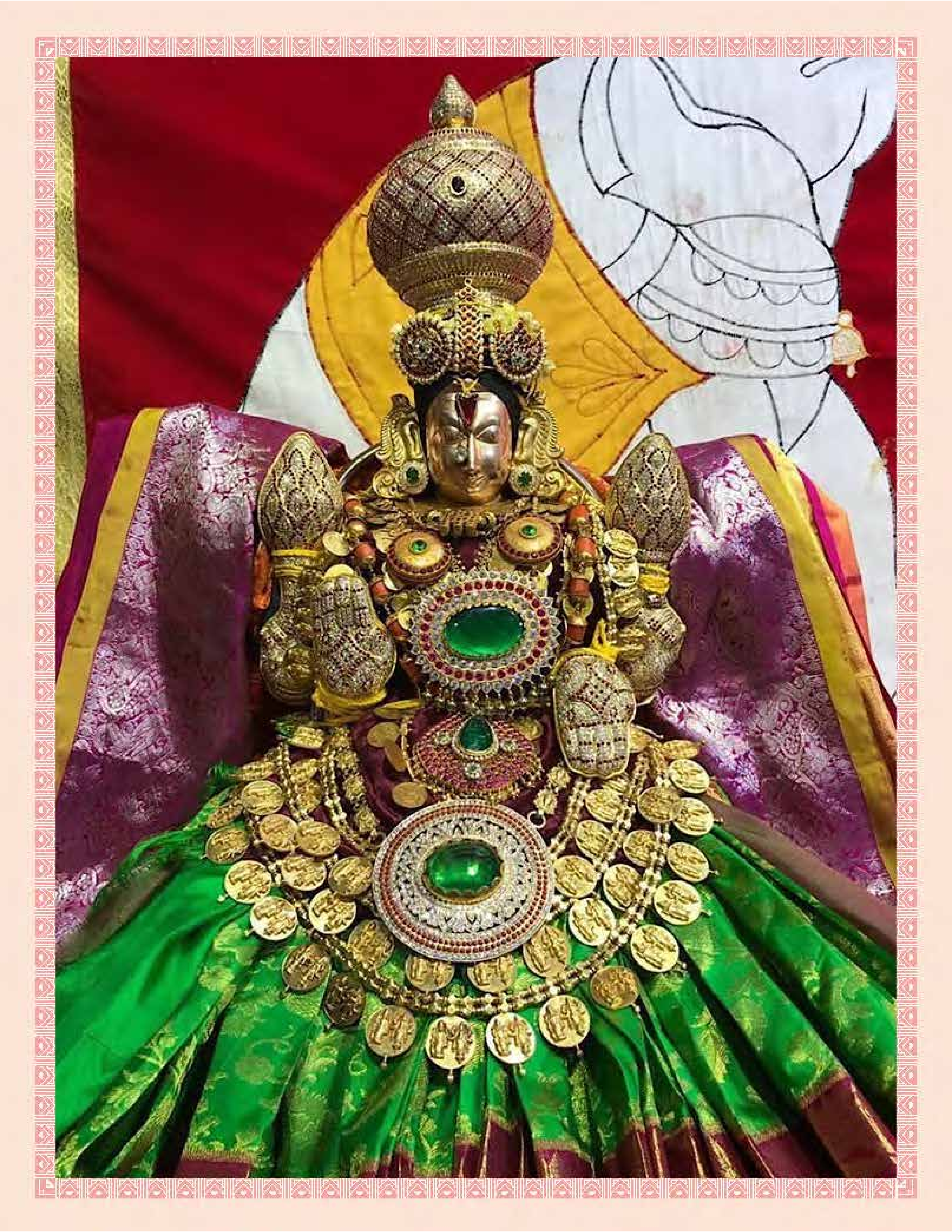


quite eloquent when advising others about forbidden acts and cautioned them at length about engaging in these acts. I have also asked them to desist from their daring to commit these acts and warned them that great danger awaits if they do not heed my words. However, when it comes to my own actions, in the full view of all I have advised I do exactly the opposite of what I advise them. My actions are in the manner of the kulinga bird, which painstakingly offers sane advice about dangers that lay ahead for others but daringly engages in the act of picking away the piece of elephant meat stuck between the teeth of a slumbering lion blissfully unaware that the lion can close its mouth at any time." This is reflected in the tribute "ghoraM kuli~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me" of this Daya Satakam verse. It is instructive to recall the words of Shishupala from the Mahabharata wherein during the performance of the Rajasuya Yaj~na, the question of whom to offer first worship (agra pUja) came up. The most exalted personality in the assembly of such a sacrificial ceremony is first offered worship. After all arrangements were made for Yudhistira's sacrifice, the next consideration was who should be worshipped first in the ceremony. This particular ceremony is called agrapUja. agra means first, and pUja means worship. In the sacrificial assembly, all the members were very exalted. Some proposed to elect one person as the perfect candidate for accepting agrapUja, and others proposed someone else. Then Bhishma, the son of Shantanu, spoke giving his opinion, "As the sun is the center of all luminescing objects, so Krishna is the center of all living beings. Our sacrificial altar is illuminated and blessed by His presence as a sunless region is blessed by the sun. Therefore, I feel that Krishna should be the first worshiped in this assembly."

Bhishma, the great grandsire of the Kurus, then ordered Sahadeva to offer the agrapuja to Lord Krishna. However, Shishupala could not bear to see that worship offered to Lord Krishna. He spoke up influenced by envy and hatred, "O descendant of the Kuru race, this Krishna does not deserve royal worship as if he were a king. You sons of Pandu are acting like children. Bhishma, the son of Ganga, obviously, possesses little knowledge. He deserves to be censured amongst the honest and wise. How does this one of the Yadu dynasty, who is not even a king, deserve worship before all the exalted kings present? Krishna is not certainly the oldest in age, for here is His father, Vasudeva. If you regard Krishna as a well-wisher, there is a greater well-wisher present here as King Drupada. When Drona is present, how could you regard Krishna as a greater preceptor? Do you regard Krishna as greater in wisdom than Dvaipayana Vyasa? Amongst the warriors present, the great Bhishma, who can die only at his will, stand supreme. How could Krishna receive worship before him? When Ashvatthama, the knower of every

branch of knowledge is present, how could you worship Krishna? When Duryodhana, the bull of the Bharata race, is present how could Krishna be worshipped first? Passing over Kripa, the preceptor of the Bharata princes, why have you worshiped Krishna? When Bhishmaka, Rukmi, Ekalavya, Salya or Karna are present, how could you worship Krishna? This slayer of Madhu is neither a sacrificial priest, nor a preceptor, nor a king. With what understanding have you worshiped Krishna? O chief of the Kurus, you have rejected qualified persons to be first worshiped from motives for gain. If you had planned to worship this Krishna, then why have you brought all these kings here to be insulted? This wretch born of the Vrishni race has caused the slaying of King Jarasandha by unrighteous means. Oh Yudhisthira, you have abandoned righteousness today."

Then turning to Lord Krishna, Shishupala, who was bringing death upon his head, spoke the following death knell of words, "Oh Janardana, why have You accepted the position of being first worshiped? You have acted like a dog that laps up clarified butter stolen from the sacrifice. Oh slayer of Madhu, as a wife is to one without virile power, as a fine play is to one who is blind, so this royal worship is to thee who are not even a king." Shishupala addresses Bhishma with the words "Kulinga shakunirnAma parshvEhi mamata pare bhiShmatasya sadAvachaH shrUyanteta vigharhithAH" (Your words become meaningless). One's words acquire value if they practice what they preach. The declaration "yaj~nAya carati sreShta:" highlights this fact. For example, if elders instruct people in the nuances of the shastras and establish the practice of the shastras through their anushtanam, it inspires their followers to adopt this practice. Shishupala then addresses Bhishma and asks the question "You have provided instruction at length about the various practices to be adopted. However, when it comes to the agra puja for the Rajasuya yaj~na, you have suggested that there is none worthier than Krishna. What is so great about Him? This does not sit well". In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan characterizes himself through the tribute "ghoraM kuli~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me". Svami Desikan's mastery with word-play is noteworthy in this instance. Specifically, he declares that even though he is of the disposition "ghoraM kuli~Nga shakuneriva ceShTitaM me", it is Daya Devi's responsibility. Specifically, on account of his sharaNagati to Her, She should have ensured that all such evil tendencies were destroyed at their root. In particular, She should have enabled Svami Desikan to establish consistency in preaching and practice. Thus, Svami Desikan skillfully absolves himself of any wrongdoing! Therefore, it becomes Daya Devi's responsibility to stop Svami Desikan from engaging in forbidden acts. Thus we conclude our exposition of this Daya Satakam verse"



We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“There is the mythical bird called Kulinga. This bird warns other birds of going near the lion and almost in the same breath, attempt to bite a flesh morsel in the lion’s mouth and become prey to the wild animal. Here Svami Desikan declares that “Having to my credit deeds that would invite the Lord’s punishment in this life itself, by reason of accumulated transgressions of the Lord’s mandates, all of this in the full knowledge of observers, I would usually advise them, warn them of incurring the Lord’s wrath. What exactly is my stature? I am like the proverbial Kulinga bird warning other birds of adventure and rashness but attempts to snatch a morsel of flesh from a lion’s mouth and die by reason of its foolish rashness.” Svami Desikan appeals to Daya Devi. “Oh Mother! Why do You not deter me from such misadventure”. The important message here is that one should avoid forbidden acts and perform the prescribed acts in a steadfast manner.



Slokam 95

विक्षेपमर्हसि दये विपलायितेऽपि

व्याजं विभाव्य वृषशैल पतेर्विहारम्।

स्वाधीन सत्त्व सरणिः स्वयमत्र जन्तौ

द्राघीयसी दृढतरा गुण वागुरा त्वम्॥ ९५॥

vikShepam arhasi daye vipalAyite(a)pi

vyAjaM vibhAvya vR^iShashaila pater vihAram I

svAdhIna satva saraNiH svayamatra jantau

drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam II 95



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

“This verse is “vikShepam arhasi daye vipalAyite(a)pi vyAjaM vibhAvya vR^iShashaila pater vihAram svAdhIna satva saraNiH svayamatra jantau drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam”. Here Svami Desikan after having submitted his imploring appeals in the previous verses is now posited with a question by Daya Devi. Specifically, Daya Devi asks “Oh Svami! You have submitted the burden of your protection to Me. Furthermore, you have also stated that it is My responsibility to restrain you from engaging in forbidden acts. Don’t you have to do anything in this case?” Daya Devi remarks “padmapatravasenApi nakShamAmi vasundhare.” The Varaha Charama slokam which is in the form of an upadesam from Bhagavan Varaha to Bhumidevi has been exposited in great detail by Svami Desikan in the grantham Rahasya ShikhamaNi. In the Varaha Charama slokam, Bhagavan Varaha declares “even though you may offer worship to Me, and submit flower offerings, there are certain transgressions that I shall never forgive.” From this it becomes apparent that there are certain transgressions that can be condoned while certain others cannot. Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan “When the Varaha Charama slokam declares that certain offenses cannot be forgiven, you seem to suggest that through the path of punaH prapatti, the most heinous of sins can be destroyed. Have you discovered a new means to get around the dictates of the Lord? I am unable to understand your way of operation.” Svami Desikan’s response to Daya Devi is contained in this verse. First off, he characterizes Daya

Devi as a net, which is far reaching. Lord Srinivasa is a King. As per His usual practice He engages in the sport of hunting known as vihAram. During this act of sport, He casts the Daya Devi net far and wide. This is intended to ensnare common beings. There is an important difference between this sport of Lord Srinivasa and the hunting undertaken by lions of the forest, which violently destroy their prey. The sport of Lord Srinivasa on the other hand seeks to capture alive beings in the forest, bring them over to His domain and nourish them with His life-giving elixir. Likewise, there are those that undertake the task of hunting a deer. Some do it with the purpose of feasting on its meat, while some others seek to capture it alive whereby the deer can offer company. It may be remembered that Lord Srinivasa has given up residence in His eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntam, to take root at the Venkatam hill. The sole purpose of His arrival at the Venkatam hill is to redeem errant baddha jivans through His act of sport, known as vihAram. The sole intent of Lord Srinivasa's sport is to identify jivans that are fitting receptacles for His grace so that they may be elevated and blessed with the ultimate benefit of nitya kaimkaryam. This is the underlying purpose for engaging in the act of sport of hunting. However, the one thing to note is that while Lord Srinivasa seeks us out, we seem to move further away from Him. Therefore, He casts the Daya Devi net in the hope that jivans get ensnared by the net. This is a reflection of Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruviruttam Pasuram "en ninRa yOniyumAi piRantAi imaiyOr talaivA". The Bhagavadgita too discusses this while detailing the avatara kAraNam of Lord Narayana. Lord Krishna specifically states "bahUni me vyatItAni janmAni tava cArjuna| tAnyahaM veda sarvANi na tvaM vettha paraMtapaH" (Every time you have taken birth, I too have accompanied you with a corresponding birth. However, I know each of these births, whereas you do not). Lord Krishna then proceeds to reveal an important rahasyam. At that point Arjuna seems to think that every time he takes birth so too does Krishna. Therefore, there is no difference between them. Lord Krishna steps in promptly to dispel this notion and instead offers the correct perspective through the instruction "There is a difference between your birth and Mine. My birth comes about always on account of My sankalpam. For example, when the Devatas performed sharaNAgati for relief from Ravana's tyranny, I resolved to take birth as Rama, the son of Dasharatha and Kausalya. The Brahmanas of the Dandakaranya forest submitted their appeal to Me that due to the harassment from rakshasas such as Khara, Dhushana, and Ravana, they were unable to engage in their activities of Tapas and Dhyanam. At that point I assured them that I shall destroy the entire Rakshasa clan at the root. While this came about due to Lord Narayana's sankalpam in that He could precisely determine to whom He would be born, we have no such

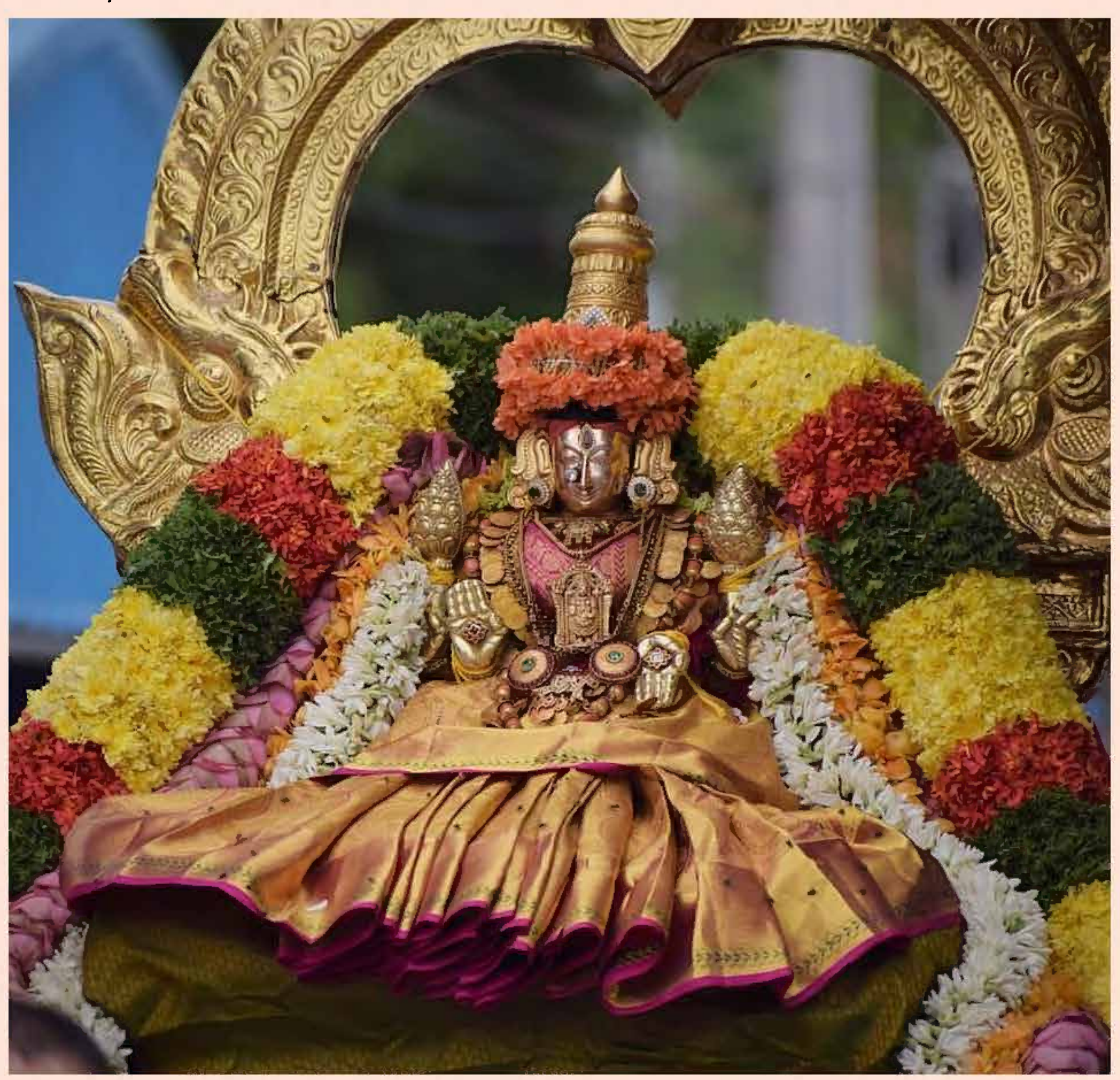
control over our birth or whom we would be born as. It is entirely governed by our Karma. Thus, Lord Krishna exposited on this important difference to Arjuna and observed that since the birth for the Lord comes about due to His sankalpam, it is known as avatAram. On the otherhand Arjuna's birth is governed by Karma and is thus an avirbhAvam. Due to sankalpam the Lord begets births as the son of Kausalya, Devaki and the like. However, on account of Karma jivans like Arjuna beget births. If the prevailing Karma is good they get births in a good family, have the chance to engage in adhyayanam, and Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. On the otherhand if the prevailing Karma is bad, then one takes birth in a family given to bad ways. They turn out to be nastikas, who stay away from Lord Narayana. Lord Krishna specifically states in His instruction (to Arjuna) that He incarnates for the sole purpose of redeeming baddha jivans who are dear to Him. So much so that He accompanies these jivans during every one of their births with the view point of affording them an opportunity at redemption and gaining the benefit of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Svami Nammazhvar's mangalasasanam highlighting this fact is captured in the Tiruviruttam Pasuram "en ninRa yOniyumAi piRantAi imaiyOr talaivA! Mei ninRu kETTaruLAi aDiyEn ceiyyum viNNappamE". This pasuram is rendered routinely at Kanchipuram during the Garudotsavam celebration.



tirukkaNDEn ponmEni kaNDEn

Garuda Sevai takes place on the third morning of the festivities, which commences with the rendition of IyaRpA. This contains the mUnRAm tiruvantAti from the outpourings of Pey Azhvar, who declares "tirukkaNDEn ponmEni kaNDEn tikazhum arukkan aNi nirRamum kaNdEn cerukkiLarum ponnAzhi kaNDEn puricankam kaikkaNDEn ennAzhi vaNNan pAL inRu". This pasuram as well as Svami NammAzhvar's Tiruviruttam Pasuram are rendered on this day. There are a couple of reasons for this. Pey Azhvar's pasuram highlights the inseparability of Lord Narayana from Sri. Svami NammAzhvar's Pasuram brings out the reason for the Lord taking His numerous avatarams - it is expressly for the purpose of ridding baddha jivans from their bondage and ensuring their elevation. Since the Garuda Sevai takes place on Vaikasi Vishakam day, it is customary to perform the celebration of Svami NammAzhvar through his pasurams. With regard to Pey Azhvar's tribute, it is the Panchajanya conch that stands out amidst the numerous mAlais adorning the Lord during Garuda Sevai. This manner of celebration is a tradition handed to us by our purvas, to re-create the anubhavam of Pey Azhvar and Svami NammAzhvar. What is the reason for Lord Varadaraja to go on a procession for several miles in the sweltering heat? He could very well grace all comers from His abode at Hastigiri. However, it is His overbearing concern to grace commoners who may not have an opportunity to come to Hastigiri to offer prostrations that causes Him to undertake the journey. Thus, it becomes clear that Lord Narayana takes on the Archa form and Vibhava form solely for the purpose of redeeming errant baddha jivans. However, these baddha jivans fail to recognize this fact and thus are never ensnared in His net. For example, if the Sevai takes place at night one might be inclined to think why bother staying awake in the late hours of the night. Let's see if we can get the Darsanam in the morning. Thus, some unfortunate ones may have their doors locked, a/c turned on and blissfully remain asleep when the Lord arrives at their doorstep. At day-break, they may have the mindset "who has the time to wait for the Lord to arrive. I need to go to the office to take care of my work." Thus, even though the Lord has gone the extra mile to afford the baddha jivan several opportunities to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, the jivan stays away and thus misses out on the opportunities. This is the implication of not being ensnared by the Lord's hunting net. Therefore, in this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan submits an eloquent tribute "vikShepam arhasi daye vipalAyite(a)pi" (Oh Daya Devi! You need to perform a great act of help for me. You have made all good acts subservient to You.) When it comes to us, we are unable to engage in any good acts, whereas we are able to engage in forbidden acts

without any restraint. This is captured in the tribute “svAdhIna satva saraNiH” of this Daya Satakam verse.

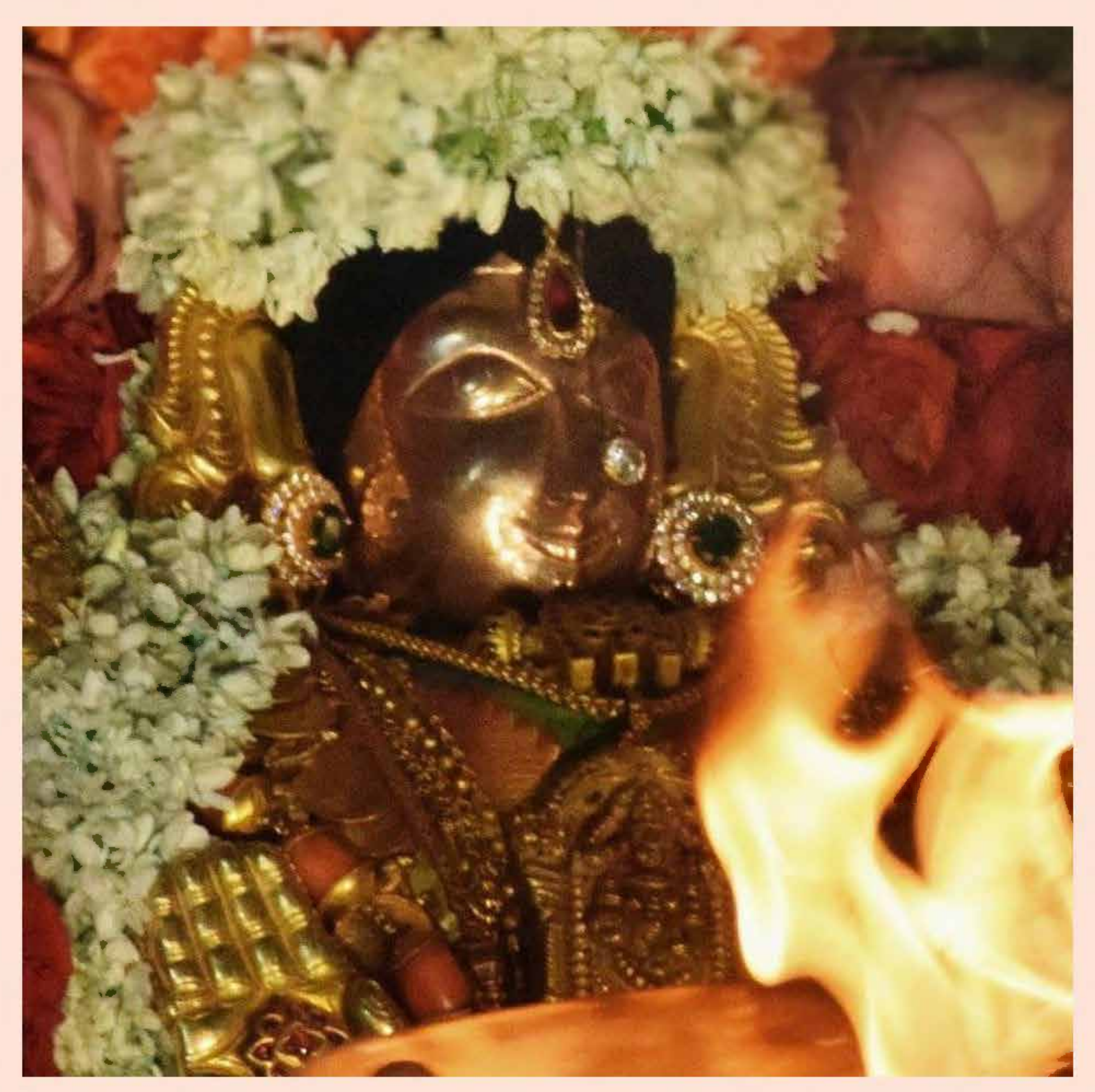


She is the net cast by Lord SrI Srinivasa

Furthermore, Svami Desikan has described Daya Devi as the net of Lord Srinivasa. Now this net needs to be cast where there are likely jivans that would be ensnared. Otherwise, there is no point in having the net. Usually, when nut bearing crops are grown, foxes tend to feast upon them. To prevent this, a net is cast near the crop to ensnare the fox. Similarly, if one wishes to catch deer, the net has to be cast in the appropriate place in the forest. An attempt to do this in the city would be futile. In this context, Daya Devi is fully aware of the places where errant baddha

jivans can likely be found and reformed. Svami Desikan declares here that he is steeped in the wrong path. Even if it be so, Daya Devi out of Her compassion seeks to reform him and bring him towards Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This is brought forth in the tribute "svAdhIna satva saraNiH". Now that it has been established that Lord Srinivasa has entered the hunting sport of capturing alive baddha jivans with the goal of reforming them and that Daya Devi serves as His net to ensnare them, Svami Desikan describes the net further through the tribute "drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam". This net is long and wide as attested to by the usage "drAghIyasI". Furthermore, the net is firm with no escape for those ensnared by this net as evidenced by "dR^iDhatarA". One can visualize this through an example. Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi as dampatis engage in a good act for a specific purpose. This is brought about on account of some excuse. When the Purusha is giving away his wealth, Daya Devi lines up a set of suitable recipients for this wealth so that they may be benefitted. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi is extremely fond of those who have performed sharaNAgati to Her/Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, while Lord Srinivasa is dispensing His abundant grace, She desired for Her sharaNAgatas to be the first recipients after which everyone else follows. It is common for one to think of one's responsibilities as those of providing good education for their children as a consequence of which they gain good employment. After this is the issue of getting them married to a bride/groom from a suitable family and ensure they beget progeny. However, one's responsibility does not cease there. Instead as elders they bear the responsibility of ensuring that they and all their family members are treading the correct path - namely engaging in sat vishayam and rendering Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Not only that the elders incur the responsibility of ensuring the protection of the atmA of each of their family members. Therefore, it becomes their duty to provide sadAcArya sambandham for their family members as a consequence of which Bharanyasam is performed and the redemption of the Atma is guaranteed. Thus, the responsibilities incurred are quite onerous. However, for some reason or the other, people move away from these responsibilities especially those involving the nurturing of Bhagavad Kaimkaryam for their offspring as well as ensuring that Bharanyasam is performed. However, they fulfill the rest of their responsibilities. On the otherhand Daya Devi's disposition is such that She has adopted the motto of "catch them young" to make sure that "Her children - errant baddha jivans" have performed sharaNAgati at the feet of an Acharya. However, even after performance of SharaNAgati, these jivans seem to be taking to nastika ways. It is with the sole intent of reforming these renegade children that Daya Devi casts Her net. When performing prapatti for

as an excuse to cast Her extremely strong net far and wide so that errant baddha jivans like him can be trapped and reformed.



svAdhIna satva saraNiH svayamatra jantau

The salutation "svAdhIna satva saraNiH svayamatra jantau" denotes that all good acts are under the control of Daya Devi. The appeal here is that She must transform Svami Desikan (who considers himself otherwise useless in a state of intense self-deprecation) into svayamatra jantau (something that is useful). It is instructive to note that Svami Desikan does not describe himself as someone learned or knowledgeable in the Sastras. Instead, he refers to himself as a common

these baddha jivans Acharyas have declared before Lord Narayana "This jivan belongs to me. You must overlook all his transgressions and confer upon him Your grace". It is solely to uphold the statement of the Acharyas that Daya Devi takes on the form of a net to ensnare these errant jivans and reform them. The tribute "drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam" again highlights the fact that all the kalyAna guNams of Lord Srinivasa are subservient to Daya Devi and are therefore a part of Daya Devi. This makes the net impossible to escape from. It is vast, and it is so strong that nobody can escape from this net once they are caught. Svami Desikan then submits his appeal "tvam" (Oh Daya Devi!) "vipalAyite(a)pi" (Even though I run away and make great efforts to not get caught in this net, it is Your responsibility to ensure that I am ensnared by this net.) Daya Devi is quite astounded by this argument offered by Svami Desikan. Svami Desikan continues "Indeed I have performed sharaNAgati at Your Feet. Therefore, the burden of protecting me and the attendant consequences entirely become Your responsibility. Furthermore, any additional sins committed post-prapatti become Your obligation too. Either You need to ensure that I do not engage in such acts or even if I do, You need to correct for this through prayaschittams or in the extreme case through performance of punaH prapatti." In this context, it is helpful to note that our purvas have strived hard to encourage us to take part in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. They have also provided us with Sadacharya sambandham as a consequence of which Prapatti has been performed. However, our prarabha karma may be such that despite their best efforts, we may shy away from Kaimkaryam opportunities. Consequently, we are distracted and engage our mind in wasteful pursuits, which seem to be quite attractive on the face of it. It is only for such beings that the Daya Devi net is cast and they must be trapped in this net. Lord Srinivasa resident at the Venkatam hill stands ready to grant aihika phalan, amushmika phalan and even moksham. The jostling crowds and the tedium involved in the process of gaining a Darsanam of Lord Srinivasa may cause one to think it is probably too arduous to undertake this task and therefore one may even decide not to come to the Venkatam hill again. However, upon gaining the Darsanam of Lord Srinivasa, the individual is overwhelmed and looks forward to the next time he can come to offer prayers to Lord Srinivasa. This transformation is brought about by Daya Devi. This is the import of the tribute "drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam". The salutation "vR^iShashaila pateH vyAjaM vibhAvya" denotes the fact that Lord Srinivasa engages in the sport of hunting known as vihAram. Svami Desikan submits an appeal to Daya Devi here that She must use this act of the Lord



Daya Devi is the net that is impossible to escape from

being (jantu) that needs to be trapped in the Daya Devi net. In the Sannidhi of Aravamudhan at KumbhakoNam, Perumal and Thayar come out for utsavams. During these occasions, Thayar precedes Perumal especially when the path is somewhat convoluted. In other Divya Desams such as Kanchipuram, when the same convoluted paths need to be traversed, Perumal precedes Thayar. Both of these are valid and have pramaNams from Srimad Ramayanam in support of this practice. First let us examine the instance of Lord Aravamudhan, where Perumal is preceded by Thayar. The incarnation of this Archa murti is to confer His anugraham on all Bhaktas, and bring them to moksham in a step-by-step manner. The main impediment in approaching Lord Aravamudhan is one's mountainous sin-pile. This needs to be destroyed before one can gain the anugraham of Lord Narayana. It is precisely to ensure the destruction of this sin-pile that Thayar precedes Perumal. Once the impediment is removed, the Lord's grace flows automatically. Prior to leaving for the forest, Lord Rama instructs Sita Devi that She must remain in Ayodhya and serve the elders, while the Lord carries out the task of residing in the forest. Sita Devi insists on accompanying Lord Rama to the forest. Lord Rama enquires what is it that Sita Devi will accomplish by coming to the forest. Sita Devi submits "agrataste gamiShyAmi mR^idnantI kusha kaMTakAn" (The forest is replete with sharp stones, thorns, and prickly bushes. Your lotus feet will be greatly hurt by these. I shall stay in front of you and clear the path. The inner meaning is that the sin-pile of His supplicants literally scorch the feet of Lord Narayana. However, Mahalakshmi Thayar destroys this in a trice, rendering the supplicant a fitting receptacle for the Lord's grace.) This is the most valuable service rendered by Komalavalli Thayar, who precedes Perumal during the Utsavams. It is also the import of the tribute "guNa vAgurA tvam". The net is cast prior to the hunter engaging in the sport. Accordingly in this context, the Daya Devi net is cast prior to Lord Srinivasa engaging in His "vihAram" sport. Daya Devi ensures that the jivans that get trapped in Her net become privy to the Kataksham of Lord Srinivasa and are blessed with Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Now we examine the cases in Divya Desams where Perumal precedes Thayar during utsavams. Again, the Ramayanam provides the scriptural support through the statement "agrataH prayayau rAmaH sItA madhyesumadhyamA pR^iShThatastu dhanuShpANi lakShmaNau (a)nujagAma ha" This is an explanation of PraNavam. Lord Rama, who is "akAra vAchyan" (denoted by the aksharam "a") traverses the path first, followed by SItA in the middle denoted by "ukAravAchyan" (denoted by the aksharam "u"). This is indicative of Thayar's purushakarathvam (mediatrix to associate the jivan with Lord Narayana). Finally, Lakshmana with bow in hand follows SItA. This is intended to



drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam

denote the jivan/seshan that is completely subservient to the Divine Couple as evidenced by “makAra vAchyan” (the aksharam “ma”). This is the explanation from great mahans, who have studied the Ramayanam carefully and analyzed the esoteric meanings found therein. The import of this Daya Satakam verse is that Daya Devi has taken great pains to transform Herself into this net of Lord Srinivasa. One must not run away from this net. Instead, they must get ensnared in this net and become privy to Bhagavad anugraham. Sri Svami then narrated a personal episode of a family visiting Navalpakkam and very respectfully prostrating before him and his revered father to seek their blessings and gain a darsanam of Lord Srinivasa. Sri Svami concluded that this was definitely due to the grace of Daya Devi as reflected in the tribute “drAghIyasI dR^iDhatarA guNa vAgurA tvam”.

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“This verse involves a prayer to Daya Devi. We have a weakness. Even after being able to come close, in dearness and loving bonds, by virtue of performing prapatti, we tend to go astray - not so much in space, but in emotional hold and bond of affection. How so? By violation of the cardinal requirements of Prapatti. Especially in the sense of disowning our main bulwark - nay our only bulwark, the Lord, we go astray. We resort to other deities, as if any of them could grant what our Lord may fail to secure for us. This is the most heinous sin that a Prapanna may possibly incur. Now we get to the gist of the prayer.

“Oh Daya Devi! I imagine a net strong and long enough, which You could cast and catch me lest I should - in violation of Prapatti codes - go astray and go away too! I speak of a figurative net. The material making up the net is the Lord’s code of love and fond affection. Indeed, Daya Devi Herself is the constituent material (guNa vAgurA). There can be no stronger, no more viable material! You will thus be able to catch me, even if I have gone a long distance away - of course, not in terms of space - playfully do this. You alone are capable of this.”



Slokam 96

सन्तन्यमानमपराधगणं विचिन्त्य
त्रस्यामि हन्त भवतीं च विभावयामि ।
अह्नाय मे वृषगिरीश दये जहीमाम्
आशीविष ग्रहण केलि निभामवस्थाम् ॥९६ ॥

santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya
trasyAmi hanta bhavatIM ca vibhAvayAmi|
ahnAya me vR^iShagirIsha daye jahImAm
AshIviSha grahaNa keli nibhAmavasthAm||96



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now examine another amazing verse of the Daya Satakam commencing with "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya". The previous verse glorified the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa. It is with the sole purpose of gracing beings like us that Lord Srinivasa gave up residence in His eternal abode, Sri Vaikuntam and took root at the Venkatam hill as the archa murti. This is documented in the tribute "mAyAvi paramAnandam tyaktvA vaIkuNTham uttamam svAmi puShkaraNI tIre ramayA sahamodate". Lord Srinivasa is capable of extraordinary acts, which beings like us cannot even imagine. Sometimes we may be given to think that we have performed great acts of good. Therefore, some great benefit awaits us. On the other hand, we may behold someone engaging in despicable acts and we may assume that great narakam awaits him. However, what transpires is quite the opposite. The one who performed good acts may encounter great difficulty, whereas one that commits despicable acts is rewarded with great benefits. Lord Narayana Himself declares "anyohyanyacintayati svacChandaM vyavadAmyaham" (You may think whatever you want. However, I act in My own way.) In this context the puraNam declares that Lord Srinivasa took root at the Venkatam hills on the banks of the Svami pushkaraNi for the sole purpose of gracing jivans like us. Svami Desikan notes that on account of this fact, it is imperative for jivans like us to gain the kataksham of Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi to become receptacles for Their unbounded grace. SVami Desikan declared in the previous verse that even though


paDiyAi kiDantu un pavaLa vAi kANbEnE!

Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi stand ready to grace us, we tend to stay away from Them. By going far away, our sin-pile causes us to miss out on the kataksham of Lord Srinivasa. Even though Bhaktas throng to the shrine of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill in large numbers each day, there is a larger group of jivans that has not become privy to the kataksham of Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, in the previous verse Svami Desikan described Lord Srinivasa as engaged in a sport of hunting known as vihAram. This sport, unlike common hunting where the prey is ruthlessly killed, is intended to catch errant jivans alive, and bring about a transformation in them so that they become privy to the grace of Srinivasa and gain Bhagavad Kaimkaryaam. Thus, it is a sport intended for protecting jivans. Daya Devi functions as the net of Lord Srinivasa. This net is broad and wide. It is extremely strong in that once a jivan is captured in the net there is no way of escape. Svami Desikan's prayerful submission is that Daya Devi must cause him to be trapped in this net. This is the act of affection displayed by Daya Devi towards jivans as She makes them worthy receptacles for the grace of Lord Srinivasa and causes them to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. After Svami Desikan's prayerful submission from the previous verse Daya Devi posits another question to Svami Desikan. The reply to this question is contained in this exquisite verse of the Daya Satakam. Since this verse houses several shAstrArthams (esoteric meanings of the shAstras), it is important to gain a background of sharaNAgati prior to delving into Daya Devi's question or Svami Desikan's reply. First off the shAstras outline that those who desire to perform sharaNAgati do so with the full understanding that this involves five angAs – 1) AnukUlasya sankalpam (Acting in ways pleasing to Lord Narayana), 2) prathikUlasya varjanam (Avoiding anything that displeases Him), 3) mahAvishvAsam (Firm belief that Lord Narayana will protect under all circumstances), 4) kArpaNyam (inability to protect oneself by one's own means) and 5) goptR^itva varaNam (Being a destitute without Lord Narayana). All of these are important but, most important among them is mahAvishvAsam. vishvAsam is commonly known as trust. However, mahAvishvAsam is unwavering faith that Lord Narayana will protect the supplicant come what may. If this is present at the time of performance of sharaNAgati, it would definitely be successful. The purpose for which sharaNAgati is performed becomes fructified. How so? The prabhAvam (greatness) of sharaNAgati is such that all sins committed prior to the performance of sharaNAgati are destroyed in a trice. There are a few categories of sins - sancita pApam (those sins that have not begun to yield consequences) prArabdha pApam (The accumulated sins that are yielding consequences) and buddhipUrvaka pApam (sins committed knowingly after performance of sharaNAgati), and

abuddhipUrvaka pApam (sins committed unknowingly). Performance of sharaNAgati destroys the sancita pApam. Even the prArabdha karma except that pertaining to the remaining lifetime of the sharaNAgata is destroyed as a result of performance of sharaNAgati. “prArabdha khanDanjanAH nyAsena kShapayan” is the salutation from the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram that describes this fact. Svami Desikan highlights the fact that all prArabdha karma except that pertaining to the remainder of the Prapanna’s lifetime is destroyed as documented in the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram salutation “prArabdhena pUrvapApam akhilam sAmAdhikamchottaram nyAsena kShapayan”. Now when it comes to the sins performed knowingly after BharanyAsam, the compassionate Lord Narayana again offers a way out through the undertaking of prAyashcitta prapatti. For those with a cluttered mind, who may be hard hearted and think that their mokSha prapatti for Lord Narayana is sufficient protection and continue to knowingly engage in sinful behavior post-prapatti, they too are rid of these sins through some laghu daNDanai (light punishment) in keeping with the statement “kautilye shati shikShayApi anapAyan” Svami Desikan declares “roTi karoti prabhuH” Thus, Lord Narayana ensures that once an individual has resorted to sharaNAgati, he is ultimately rendered fit to perform Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. In summary there are two kinds of sins that arise - buddhipUrvaka pApam and abuddhipUrvaka pApam. For the former kind there are two options to get rid of the consequences of the sins. One is to perform prAyashcitta prapatti while the other is to endure light punishment that is meted out by Lord Narayana. This is the shAstram. Thus, it becomes clear that even if one commits sins knowingly after performance of Prapatti, Lord Narayana ensures that they are still privy to His grace and can secure mokSham. In this context it is helpful to recall an episode from the Ramayana. SIta Devi was guarded by fierce Rakshasis, who made endless threats to Her. During one such instance, trijaTa, the daughter of VibhishaNa addressed these Rakshasis and mentioned that she had a dream in which she saw Ravana clad in oil-soaked garments (complete ashuddhi) falling upside down. She also saw Rama and Lakshmana arrive and destroy all of Lanka. They then seated SIta Devi in the Pushpaka Vimana and took Her. Therefore, there is a great tragedy that is about to befall Lanka. She declared “If we need to escape this calamity, we need to perform sharaNAgati to SIta Devi as described in the statement“. If such an act is undertaken, we will be rescued in keeping with the statement “alamesha paritrAtum rAghavan rAkShasIgaNam”.” Therefore, on behalf of all the Rakshasis, Trijata undertook the performance of sharaNAgati to Sita Devi. SIta Devi accepted this sharaNAgati with the statement “yadi tat satyam”. This took place in the

Sundara KANDam, when Hanuman had arrived in Lanka. Two months passed since Hanuman came to Lanka and went back to Lord Rama to convey the glad tidings. During this period, the Rakshasis again resorted to their threats towards SIta Devi. This was carried out under orders from Ravana. This raises the question whether the sins of the Rakshasis were buddhipUrvakam or abuddhipUrvakam. It is definitely the former. SIta Devi declares "marshayAmisha dhurbala" (Since I am powerless, I have to endure all the threats and insults from these Rakshasis). Even so, when time came, SIta Devi protected all the Rakshasis. Did these Rakshasis undertake prAyashcitta prapatti? Who were they protected from? When Hanuman arrived at SIta Devi's side proclaiming Lord Rama's victory over Ravana, he sought Her permission to pulverize to his heart's content each of the Rakshasis that had tortured SIta Devi. SIta Devi was rendered speechless upon hearing about Lord Rama's victory. However, She did not grant permission to Hanuman for carrying out the gruesome act of punishing the Rakshasis. Instead, She responded to Hanuman with the salutation "pApAnAm vA shubhAnAm vA vadhArhANAm plava~NgamaH kAryam karuNamAryenA na kashcit naparAdhyati". (According to your perspective if they sinned knowingly, or else if they were merely carrying out the orders of their master, Ravana, there is no one that has not sinned. Therefore, do not harm them.) Thus, the Rakshasis were saved from the wrath of Hanuman on account of the sharaNAgati performed by Trijata. Just like the Rakshasis who engaged in buddhipUrvaka pApam after the performance of sharaNAgati but were rescued by SIta Devi despite not having resorted to prAyashcitta prapatti, is it not possible for Lord Narayana to similarly come to our rescue even if we may have engaged in buddhipUrvaka pApam? Svami Desikan answers this through the salutation "kautilye shati shikShayapi anapAyan" to denote that prapannas who engage in buddhipUrvaka pApam after Prapatti but do not undertake prAyashcitta prapatti, are subjected to punishments within their lifespan to remove the effects of these sins. Now when it comes to the Rakshasis that were guarding SIta Devi, one may ask there is no apparent punishment. Svami Desikan states that even for these Rakshasis there was a punishment. What was it? Hanuman requested permission from SIta Devi to pulverize the Rakshasis to his heart's content since they had tortured SIta Devi. This was done in the presence of the Rakshasis. While SIta Devi was preparing to answer Hanuman's request, the one moment of not knowing what Her answer would be was like eternal torture to the Rakshasis. This was the punishment they endured. They were not sure if SIta Devi would agree to Hanuman's request. In this case their fate would be sealed. On the other hand, they were not sure if SIta Devi would turn down Hanuman's request. That moment of

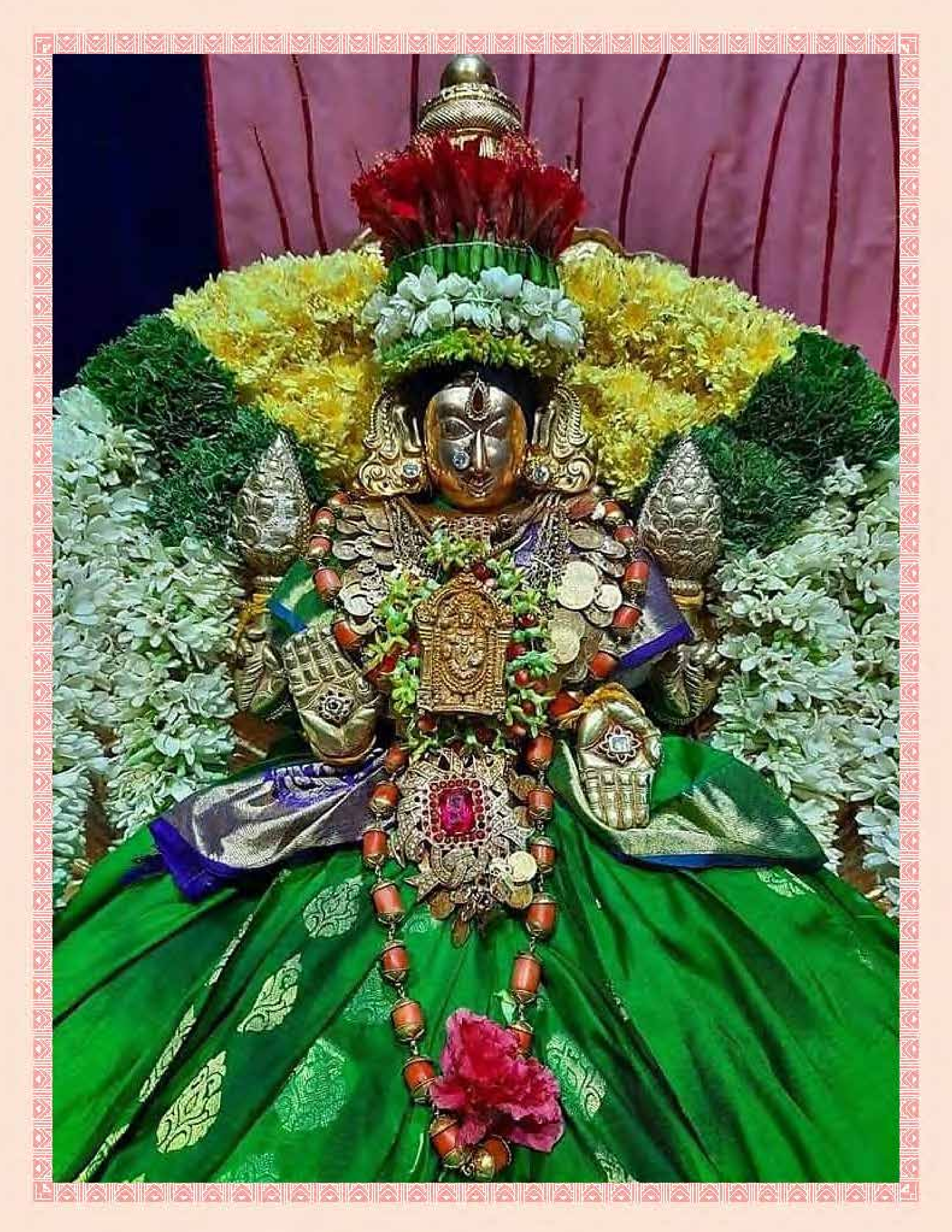


bhaveyam sharaNam hi vaha

uncertainty induced extreme fear in the Rakshasis and constituted their punishment for buddhipUrvaka pApam. Only after they were subjected to this moment of punishment, did the Rakshasis receive protection from SIta Devi. In the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram Svami Desikan describes this as "vALAlE vIci OnkiviDumApOlE". For example, if one has been declared to be subject to punishment by beheading by a sword and the sword has been sharpened for this purpose, the writing is clearly on the wall. The individual subject to this punishment closes his eyes in anticipation that sword would land on his neck and is unable to bear this sight. However, if the sword is merely swung but stops short of beheading the person, the plight of the individual prior to stopping the beheading is quite tortuous. This is the punishment that Svami Desikan refers to for buddhipUrvaka pApam. The punishment meted out to the Rakshasis was very much in keeping with the spirit of this sentiment. With this background, we now explore the question posited by Daya Devi and Svami Desikan's answer through verse 96. Daya Devi asks of Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! What you are expositing is great to hear. You have performed sharaNAgati at My feet with mahAvishvAsam. After that you engage in buddhipUrvaka pApam for which you undertake prAyashchitta prapatti. However, after this act do you refrain from further sins? No instead you commit more sins and then again resort to prAyashcitta prapatti leading to an infinite loop. This being the case, how can I accept your submission and rescue you?" Svami Desikan's reply is summarized in the verse "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya trasyAmi hanta bhavatIM ca vibhAvayAmi ahnAya me vR^iShagirIsha daye jahImAm AshIviSha grahaNa keli nibhAmavasthAm".

The tribute "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya trasyAmi" reflects a great fear on the part of Svami Desikan. He has not uttered these words thus far and only now uses them. If one examines this slokam carefully it becomes apparent that this meant exclusively for us. What is it that is scaring Svami Desikan? It is the monumental sins! In reality, this is the sin-pile that we have accumulated, since Svami Desikan exhibited blemishless conduct. Svami Desikan continues further "Oh Daya Devi! I contemplate upon You and my fear is at once banished". For example, adiyen undertakes upanyasam of a given subject. During that time adiyen thinks that he has prepared something and is delivering it to an audience. However, it is not so. The upanyasam comes about entirely on account of the grace of adiyen's Acharyan and Daya Devi. However, this faith is not absolute and does not prevail at all times. Each time adiyen goes for an upanyasam adiyen is plagued by the thoughts of "have I prepared adequately for this upanyasam? Is there sufficient content for one hour?" However, due to the grace of adiyen's Acharya, adiyen is

able to deliver the upanyasam for the prescribed time. When the upanyasam is nearing completion, the only thought that comes to mind is that this has been successful entirely on account of Acharya anugraham. The next day however, the same thoughts pertaining to the preparation and delivery resurface, instead of thinking that yesterday it was only Acharyan's grace that ensured the success of the upanyasam. Hopefully, by his grace today's upanyasam too will be successful. Another example here is helpful to consider. A young boy's parents take him and submit him to the care of a teacher for the purpose of taking an exam. The teacher assures the boy that he should take the exam. It would be the teacher's responsibility to ensure that somehow the boy passes the exam. However, the boy is beset with fear of inadequate preparation and hence, poor performance on the exam. Even though the teacher has assured him of all possible help to pass the exam, the boy begins to doubt the ability and authority of the teacher. Likewise, in another instance one may approach someone with a request for employment. The latter advises the former to submit an application and attend the interview and that he would do everything possible to help the former get the job. Despite applying and attending the interview, the candidate is plagued by self-doubt and entertains unnecessary thoughts of "how many others more qualified than me would apply for the position? How many of them may have performed better than me in the interview? What are my chances? This despite being assured of getting the job by a higher authority." In all these cases there is a total lack of mahavishvAsam in the person that has promised a successful outcome. Due to this fact, until the success materializes, one is steeped in fear. This sentiment is eloquently mirrored in the tribute "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya" The sambodhanam here is "vR^iShagirIsha daye" (Oh Daya Devi of Srinivasa). Specifically, Svami Desikan reiterates that he is a repeat offender and yet after each violation he resorts to prAyashcitta prapatti. Svami Desikan further declares that even though he has performed prapatti with mahavishvAsam, upon looking at his sin-pile he is plagued by the doubt of whether he would get the promised benefit from prapatti and is thus in a state of fear. Can this be called an inferiority complex or a lack of confidence? This is the state that Svami Desikan adopts in this instance. Here it must not be interpreted as a lack of confidence on Svami's part or an instance of inferiority complex. Svami Desikan is fully aware of his svarUpam. He has performed sharaNAgati to Daya Devi with full mahAvishvAsam. This alone is sufficient to guarantee Moksham. Thus, Svami Desikan's disposition is entirely in accordance with shAstram. For example, the shAstram instructs us that sandhyAvandanam needs to be performed at the appropriate time. In another



instance, the shAstram instructs us that one should not utter a lie. It is entirely because one is bound by the dictates of the shAstram that one conforms to these instructions. In a similar vein the shAstras outline that performance of sharaNAgati rids one of all sins. Due our mahAvishvAsam in the shAstram, we undertake the performance of sharaNAgati. Despite the MahAvishvAsam, when one thinks about the magnitude of offenses that one has engaged in, it is inevitable to be plagued by doubts of whether the sharaNAgati destroys sins of this magnitude. In the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram, Svami Desikan engages in an elaborate discussion of the kinds of sins that one engages in. First off there are sins committed in secret (rahasya kR^itam). For these kinds of sins, one needs to engage in prAyashcittam at least in secrecy. Then there are sins committed in a manner that becomes widely known. For these kinds of sins, the prAyashcittam too has to be undertaken in full view of those who have beheld these sinful acts. For rahasya kR^itam pApam, one becomes entirely accountable to one's conscience. For example, one may see a beautiful woman walking across the street. This may arouse different feelings in different people. For instance, one may think whether the lady is more beautiful than one's wife. This itself is a sinful thought. Likewise, the roles may be reversed when a woman beholds a handsome man on the street. In another instance one may wish ill for another without explicitly stating it. This too falls under the rahasya kR^itam pApam category. Even though these acts are carried out in secret, prAyashcittam for these sins must necessarily be undertaken. parasya kR^itam prApam is the category of sins carried out explicitly. For example, if one has committed apachAram towards a BhAgavata in the open, one needs to immediately seek forgiveness openly from the BhAgavata for the apachAram. To illustrate this point, Svami Desikan quotes the instance from the Srimad Ramayanam detailing the encounter between Sugriva and Lakshmana. Greatly angered by the fact that Sugriva did not come to help Rama at the end of the rainy season, Lakshmana entered Kishkinda and delivered the stark warning "na ca sankucitaH panthA yena vAli hato gathaH" (The path by which Vali attained his end remains open. Therefore, do not incur the wrath of Lord Rama). Sugriva realizing the gravity of his crime, performed sharaNAgati at the feet of Lakshmana uttering the salutation "vishvAsAt praNayena vA"(There is none that has not sinned. Out of my confidence in Lord Rama, I took my time to come to His help. I did not intend to not come to Rama's help. I was merely delayed.) "prekShasya kShantumarhasi" (I seek forviness for this). To this, Lakshmana responded with the tribute "yat ca shoka abhibhUtasya shR^itvA rAmAsya bhAShitam maya tvam puruShANi uktaH tat kShamasva sakhe mama" (Rama was grief stricken. Seeing his plight made me extremely angry and

thus I uttered harsh words to you. It was never my intent to cause you any mental or physical agony. Please forgive me for this act. This is the aparAdha kShamApaNam engaged in by Lakshmana.) Thus, the shAstras unequivocally state that regardless of whether a sin is committed in secrecy or in the open, the necessary atonement must be undertaken through prAyashcittam. Given this background, Svami Desikan submits his appeal to Daya Devi. First the sambodhanam in this verse is "vR^iShagirIsha daye" with the implication that only the divya dampati daya can grant His request. No one else can grant his request as documented in the tribute "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya trasyAmi" (I am steeped in fear thinking of the multitude of sins I have committed - the numerous Bhagavad and Bhagavata apacArams that are constantly accruing. It is not merely the accrued sins, but also my tendency to engage in continued sinful acts after which I shudder to think of the consequences.) An important point needs to be noted here. Lord Narayana will forgive apacArams committed towards Him. However, He will never tolerate or condone apacArams committed towards His BhAgavatAs. Svami Desikan describes this as "rAja tArapachAattai pOlE" to denote the fact that a King may condone offenses committed towards him. However, anyone engaging in sinful behavior towards his Queen is summarily punished. In a like manner, Lord Narayana, never forgives apacArams committed towards His BhAgavatas. When it comes to us, we are constantly engaged in Bhagavad Apacharam, BhAgavata apacAram, or nAnavida apacAram as described by SvAmi BhAshyakarar in the gadya trayam. There are five kinds of apacAram that are an absolute taboo. However, we are blissfully engaged in these acts. Upon engaging in these acts, we are beset with fear. Instead of reasoning that we have performed sharaNAgati with mahAvishvAsam, as a consequence of which we are assured of moksham, we begin to doubt the efficacy of sharaNAgati. This state is mirrored in the salutation "santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya trasyAmi". The Uneru celvam pasurams of Kulashekara Azhvar for Lord Srinivasa submit an appeal that the Azhvar would like to be anything animate or inanimate in the precincts of Tiruvenkatam. In the 9th Pasuram of this decad, the Azhvar declares "ceDiyAya valvinaikal tIrkkum tirumAlE neDiyAnE vE~nkaTavA nin koyilin vAcal aDiyArum vAnavarum arambaiyarum kiDantiya~nkum paDiyAi kiDantu un pavaLavAi kANbEnE". The Azhvar declares "My sins are like a wild hedge. These cannot be destroyed at their root once and for all. Even though they may be cut down to size, they sprout again after the first rainfall." For example, one can see in buildings and Gopurams the growth of creepers. Even if they are cut and removed, they grow again as if someone has carefully watered them. Our sins exist in a similar manner.


vR^iShagirIsha daye

They may be destroyed once. However, they have a tendency to return again and cause us to engage in them. The Azhvar then states “Even though the sins are of this nature, Oh Srinivasa, You ruthlessly destroy them” In a similar vein, Tirumankai Azhvar declares “konREn pal uyirai kuRikkOL onRilAmaiyinAl enREnum irantArkku initAka uraittaRiyEn kunREi mEkam atir kuLirmAmalai vE~nkaTavA anRe vantaDaintEn aDiyEnai AT koNDaruLE” This pasuram is extremely moving due to the anubhava rasam. (The Azhvar declares: My sins are so grave- I have engaged in ruthless killing of innocent people. If they were wealthy, in the name of taking their wealth for service to Lord Ranganatha, I have engaged in their killing. If they were poor, I have engaged in their killing under the excuse that they did not offer me anything to take to my family. This is not one or two instances but scores of people that have been killed by me. If one were to ask me why I engaged in this, I am unable to provide a satisfactory answer. One may ask if I have engaged in Dharma Karyam of any kind? Instead of pointing the seeker with kind words to someone who can help them, I have mercilessly turned them away. I view the Venkatam hill as the rain bearing cloud and Lord Srinivasa standing atop the hill as the cool refreshing rainfall. I have been the ArdhrAparAdhi (one engaged in ceaseless aparAdhams). I have come to You as my only hope for redemption. Without You, I am a destitute. Therefore, it is Your responsibility to protect me and save me from the consequences of these grave apacharams.) In a like fashion Svami Desikan outlines his fear in the “santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNaM vicintya trasyAmi hanta bhavatIM ca vibhAvayAmi” salutation of this Daya Satakam verse. Here the implication is that Daya Devi alone is capable of rescuing one from the consequences of these grave apacharams. The use of the “cakaram” in this context is worthy of note. In other words, its use elsewhere could denote that Svami Desikan also thinks of Daya Devi, implying that there is someone else besides Her that is capable of redeeming him. However, its use in this verse affirms that his thoughts are firmly fixed on Daya Devi, who is his only hope of redemption from these grave apacharams. This can be inferred from the anvaya kramam (prose order) for this salutation “bhavatIM vibhAvayAmi ca”. Svami Desikan describes his state (in reality our pitiable state) through the tribute “ahnAya me vR^iShagirIsha daye jahImAm AshIviSha grahaNa keli nibhAmavasthAm”. Specifically, Svami Desikan describes this through an example. Let’s say one has been instructed in the Garuda Mantram. In order to test its efficacy, on a Garuda Panchami day, the individual beholds a snake slithering by and thinks that due to the Mantra Siddhi he has, he can easily capture and hold the snake. Accordingly, he does so. However, he is internally scared of how long the siddhi from the mantram will last and

whether he will be bitten by the snake. How does this relate to our state? We have performed sharaNAgati. As a consequence, we are guaranteed moksham. On the other-hand if we behold our sin-pile it is mountainous and causes us to wonder whether we will gain Moksham after all despite having performed sharaNAgati. The Garuda mantram is the antidote for the poison from the snake-bite. Having this guarantee causes me to repeatedly play with the snake. To make an analogy in the present-day context, car racing is a common sport. Despite the danger to one's life from either the instability of the car at high speed or the fire hazard, one repeatedly engages in the act of car racing. Thus, one engaged in this task too is steeped in fear. This is the state that Svami Desikan refers to in the Daya Satakam tribute and submits an appeal to Daya Devi to rid him of this fear. Specifically, Svami Desikan requests that just as the snake is destroyed once and for all by Garuda, Oh Daya Devi, You must destroy the fear arising from this state for me. This is the prayer for destruction of papArambaka pApam, namely the sins that cause one to engage in further sin resulting in a compounding effect. The inner meaning of this tribute is that "I am in a state where there is forever the threat of destruction by a snake bite due to my papArambaka papam. Therefore, I live in constant fear. Oh Daya Devi, please rid me of this pitiable condition in a most expeditious manner. You alone can accomplish this task." Here Svami Desikan expresses his sorrow at the fact that he (in reality we) engages in pApam following which he performs prAyashcittam and again engages in the same sin followed by prAyashcittam, leading to an infinite loop. How does this mirror our state? Due to some dint of good fortune, we beget sadAcarya sambandham, as a result of which sharaNAgati is performed. However, from the next moment do we make a conscious attempt to conform to the shAstras and engage exclusively in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam while avoiding all apacArams? Most definitely not. This is due to the fact, that we are unable to control our minds to focus on Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Instead, we tend to be distracted by a plethora of other things that are opposed to our svarUpam (essential nature). This causes us to engage in Bhagavad apacAram, BhAgavata apacAram and the like. As a consequence, we incur the wrath of Lord Narayana. If one is stone hearted and remains blissfully unaware of the sins he is engaged in, it causes him to unhesitatingly commit sinful acts one after another. However, for one who realizes that the path he traverses is sinful, the regret that comes about is quite grueling. The import of Svami Desikan's appeal in this verse is that we should never beget such a state and that Daya Devi should intervene in a timely manner to nip in the bud any such pApams that give rise to this state. Thus, it is clear that only the Daya of Lord Srinivasa or Divya Dampati Daya is capable of ridding us of papArambaka


bhavatIM
vibhAvayAmi
ca

papam. With this prayerful submission to Daya Devi, we conclude our exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"A prapanna has to live a life of cautious avoidance of sins. These sins have a venomous character. If we loosely yield on any count, commit a sin, albeit with some regret and moral compunction, it has its own evil influence. It invites the Lord's punishment. Additionally, it causes us to give into additional tempting sinful tendencies.

A continuous series, a lineage, an array of sins follows. This prodigious performance of prolific sins torments one, when I pause to ponder over the horde we have collected.

I am shocked. I shudder to think of it. What can I do? I resort to You, Oh Daya Devi! I practically surrender to You.

But what a vicious cycle this has led to? I swoon when I think of it.

My plight is like that of an idiot, who happened to be a master of the Garuda Mantram. He had the sinister habit of playing with venomous snakes. He would catch one; it would bite him. Only Garuda mantra chanting saves him. But then relying on his mastery of the Garuda mantra, he resorts to snake catching!

Well, I commit violations - grievous ones at that. Just because I have prAyashcitta prapatti as atonement process to eliminate the effect of the particular violation, could I resort to committing sins again and again? With such thoughts, Svami presents his appeal to Daya Devi.

When I recall the great array of sins, violations of the code of Prapatti and post-Prapatti existence, I shudder in fear. I have only one recourse, namely Daya Devi. This means in effect; I have to perform a prAyashcitta – say, punaH- prapatti! My behavior is reminiscent of a man who practices the Garuda Mantram to ward off the poison of a snake he catches and plays with it in a dangerous game!

One's resort to Prapatti as a proper atonement for any heinous sin committed would only incur an offence against Daya Devi, treating Prapatti as if it were a trifle. No doubt, I shudder at the thought of a committed sin. Equally true that I get hope from Prapatti. Oh Daya Devi! Please put an end to this situation once and for all."

Slokam 97

औत्सुक्य पूर्वमुपहृत्य महापराधान्

मातः प्रसादयितुमिच्छति मे मनस्त्वाम् ।

आलिह्य तान् निरवशेषमलब्ध तृप्तिः

ताम्यस्यहो वृषगिरीश धृता दये त्वम् ॥९७ ॥

autsukya pUrvam upahR^itya mahAparAdhAn

mAtaH prasAdayitu micChati me manastvAm|

Alihya tAn nirava sheShamalabdha tR^iptiH

tAmyas yaho vR^iShagirIsha dhR^itA daye tvam||97



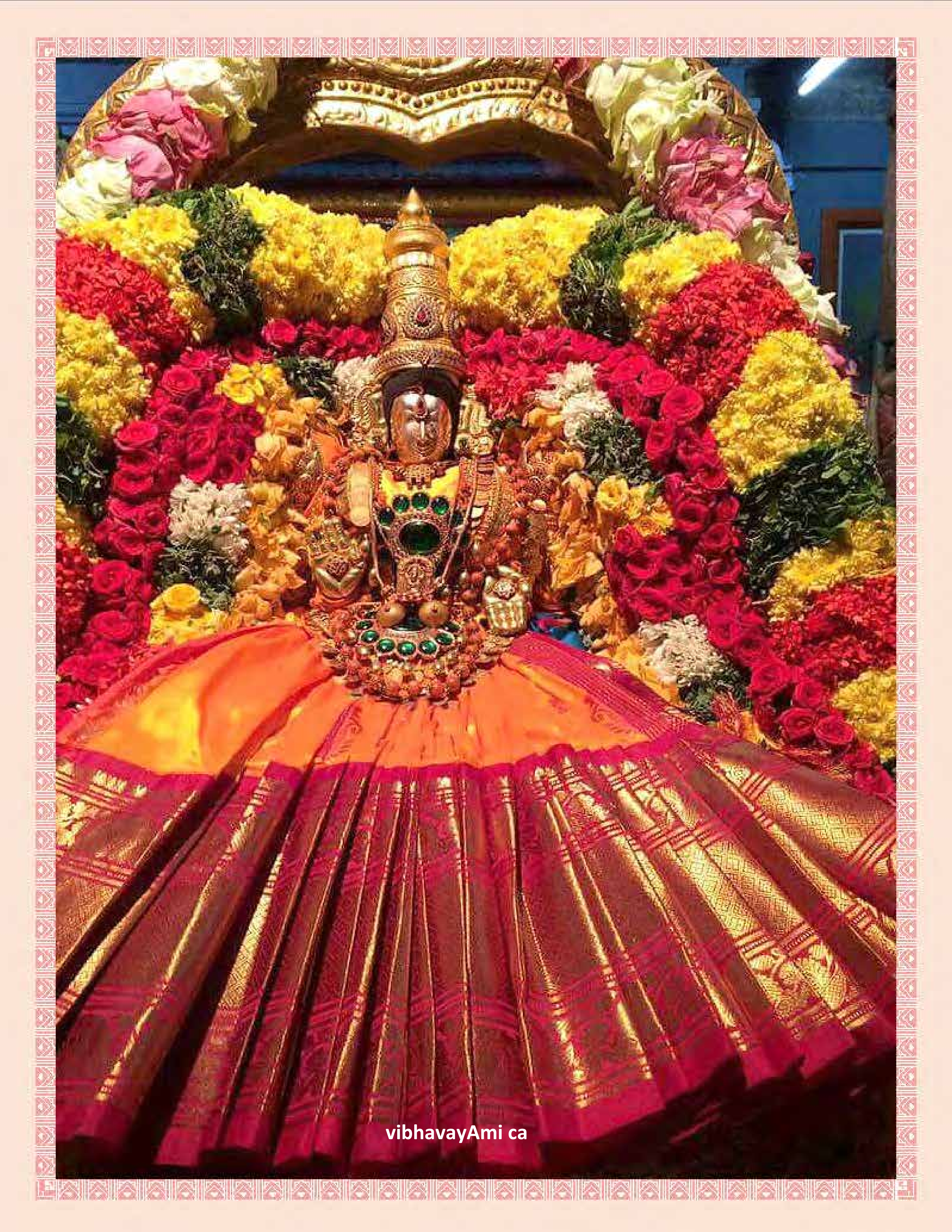
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"Svami Desikan in the previous verse declared that our continued engagement in sinful acts results in a compounding effect, which incurs the wrath of Lord Narayana. As a consequence, Svami Desikan is petrified when he thinks about this. This is known as "pApa bhIru". All of us would like to conform to the Shastras, which instruct us that our disposition should be one of pApa bhIru, namely fear accruing sins. This should be our essential nature to be on our guard so that no action of ours results in sins. If any lapse occurs on our part, we must necessarily atone for it. Svami Desikan instructs us in the NyAsa dashakam "nityam niraparAdheShu kaiMkaryeShu niyukShvamAm" (Even when engaged in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam, we need to ensure that no BhAgavata apacAram comes about as a consequence of our actions.) This is an extremely important instruction in that even when engaged in Bhagavad Kaikmaryam we need to be on our guard. We may think after all we have been blessed with Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. What wrong can arise? However, due to some difference of opinion with another BhAgavata also engaged in the same Kaimkaryam, BhAgavata apacAram can easily come about. We need to be extremely careful to avoid such an occurrence. To illustrate this fact, Svami Desikan quotes ShANDilya vR^ittAntam. Garutman is known for his antara~Nga kaimkaryam for Lord Narayana. Svami Alavandar glorifies Garutman in the Stotraratnam salutation "dAsaH sakhA vAhanamAsanaM dhvajaH yaste vitAnaM vyajanaM trayImayaH" (Garuda serves as the servant, friend, vehicle, seat, flag, and



vR^iShagirIsha dhR^itA daye tvam

the like and is replete with the three Vedas). Even for this lofty Garutman, due to an apacAram of a sAtvika nature, he was beset by difficulties. This is understood from the vR^ittAntam of ShANDilya rishi as described by Svami Desikan in the Srimad RahasyatrayasAram. Garutman had a relative Mamakalbhar, who performed Veda adhyayanam under VishvAmitra. Having mastered the Shastras and upon completion of his studies, he needed to submit Guru Dakshina to VishvAmitra. VishvAmitra gently refused his offer of Guru Dakshina. However, the student was persistent in his request to submit the Guru Dakshina. VishvAmitra demanded of him to bring 800 horses, whose ears and tail were black, but the rest of the body was white. The student submitted to Garutman "You traverse the whole world and know where such horses exist. Please help me to get 800 of these horses so that I can submit my promised Guru Dakshina." In his search, Garutman encountered an island, where there lived a great BhAgavata known as ShANDilya. Garutman was somewhat exhausted from his travel. He was cordially received by ShANDilya, who offered all forms of hospitality to relieve the fatigue. At that point Garutman thought, why has this great BhAgavata taken residence in this rather forsaken island instead of being resident in Brahma lokam or ViShNu lokam? Just this mere thought, even though in an extremely positive manner, constituted an apacAram. As a consequence, Garutman lost all his wings and could not fly. ShANDilya immediately discerned the reason for this happening and addressed Garutman "Instead of thinking of me as rendering Bhagavad Kaimkaryam from this island, you thought I should be resident in Brahma Lokam or ViShNu lokam. Therefore, you lost your wings and are unable to fly." ShANDilya then gently caressed Garutman and lo and behold! all his wings were restored, and he was able to fly again. Svami Desikan makes the point that Garutman did not engage in any wrongdoing towards ShANDilya. Thus, even when a SAtvika apacAram can result in such grave consequences, what to speak about the kind of apacArams we engage in willfully and deliberately? To drive home this point, Svami Desikaan employs the usage "trasyAmi" (I live in fear of this apacAram) in the previous verse. It may be remembered from the ViShNu SahasranAmam salutation "bhaya kR^it bhaya nAshanaH" that Lord Narayana is the cause as well as the destroyer of fear. In this context, Svami Desikan declares that he is fearful of any apacArams accruing in the process of rendering Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. In keeping with the ViShNu SahasranAmam salutation, he immediately seeks the grace of Daya Devi for destruction of these sins through the tribute "vibhavayAmi ca". This is an instruction for every BhAgavata to follow. This needs to be adopted in practice by every Sri Vaishnava. Even if it be Bhagavad Kaimkaryam that is being rendered, one


vibhavayAmi ca

must pay attention to whether such an act would cause mental anguish to a BhAgavata, as a consequence of which BhAgavata apacAram can arise. Only after ensuring that no BhAgavata is offended and no BhAgavata apacAram arises, should one undertake Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This needs to be incorporated into practice for our every act in our day-to-day lives. This is quite extraordinary in that it reminds us of our svarUpam (essential nature). Daya Devi is delighted by this reply from Svami Desikan. What is the reason for Her delight? It is Svami Desikan's appeal to Her to destroy once and for all any sins that result in additional sinful acts causing BhAgavata apacAram or violation of shAstram that can incur the wrath of Lord NArAyaNa. Once these sins are destroyed, the individual becomes blemishless. As a result, it is a cause for great delight to Daya Devi. Now on account of this monumental help of Daya Devi, Svami Desikan is rendered at a loss to express his gratitude to Her.

Now Svami Desikan reveals in this verse, the upakAram/upahAram that he can render for this great act of Daya Devi through a skillful choice of words. This verse is "autsukya pUrvam upahR^itya mahAparAdhAn mAtaH prasAdayitu micChati me manastvAm Alihya tAn nirava sheShamalabdha tR^iptiH tAmyas yaho vR^iShagirIsha dhR^itA daye tvam" If one examines the SrisUktis of AzhvArs and Kuresha, the commencement of their tribute may not have any distinguishing features. However, they build up to a crescendo as they near conclusion and reach a climax. Svami Desikan follows their lead in delivering this verse. For example, in the VaradarAja stavam and SundarabAhu stavam, Kuresha's description of the Lord's body, His various AbharaNams and the like are quite standard. However, the concluding ten verses causes him to pour out his heart in a most moving manner as he seeks out Bhagavad samsleSham and Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. So too is the case with the atimAnuSha stavam. The usage "pApIyatopi" is particularly noteworthy wherein Sri Kuresha wonders that one like him that has sinned so greatly could ever become privy to the grace of Lord NArAyaNa. However, he gains assurance from the tribute "sharaNAgata shabda bhAjaH", wherein he declares that by virtue of having performed sharaNagati to Lord VaradarAja, he is assured of the Lord's grace. Sri Kuresha further qualifies his tribute in that he is not sure whether the sharaNAgati was performed properly or not. However, merely uttering the word that he is a sharaNAgata forces the hand of Lord VaradarAja to bestow protection. In the VaradarAja stavam, Sri Kuresha submits the salutation "imaM janaM hanta! kadA(a)bhiShekShyati tvadakShiNAdyorvarada! shramApahA akR^itrima prema rasapravAhajA visR^itvarI vIkShaNavIcisantatiH" (When would I become privy to Your grace? When will Your cool compassionate eye-glances fall


mAtAH daye

upon me?) Svami Desikan too follows the lead of Sri Kuresha in works such as the DevanAyaka pancAshat, and SharaNAgati dIpika. In this Daya Satakam verse the sambodhanam (call out) is "mAtAH daye" (Oh Mother Daya Devi!). A careful examination of the Daya Satakam reveals that Svami Desikan is very selective in his usage of mAtaH for Daya Devi. It may be remembered that Daya Devi takes on several roles such as a mother caring for Her child, an AcArya for errant baddha jivans and the like. When it comes to AcAryas, after Lord NArAyaNa, next in line is MahAlakShmi tAyAr. Since Daya Devi is no different from MahAlakShmi tAyAr, She comes to the fore on account of the "karuNAmiva rUpiNIm" (if a concrete form were to be assigned to the DayA guNam it would undoubtedly be MahAlakShmi tAyAr) salutation from verse 6 of the Daya Shatakam. Thus, it is established that Daya Devi has the role of a mother as well as that of an AcArya. Svami Desikan wonders here what is it that he can do for Her? Daya Devi has rendered a monumental help by destroying all of his sins and making him blemishless - a fitting receptacle for the grace of Lord Srinivasa. For an act of this magnitude, there is nothing that can be offered by way of pratyupakAram (favor in return). When one visits the sannidhi of Lord NArAyaNa or AcAryas, one should never go empty handed in keeping with the dharma Shastra statement "rikta hastena nopeyAt". The sentiment underlying this statement is that one needs to submit an offering of some kind to Lord NArAyaNa/AcAryas, while prostrating before them in their sannidhi. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, Svami Desikan states that Daya Devi has rendered a mahopakaram for him. However, while prostrating before Her, he can only offer what he has in his possession. Therefore, he decides upon the suitable offering. The instruction "yadannaH puruSho bhavati tadannAstasya devatAH" reveals that whatever we partake as food is what we offer to our ArAdhana murti. This is our svarUpam (essential nature). The underlying instruction is that one should not submit a token offering of food to our ArAdhana murti and indulge in a feast subsequently. Instead, anything that we partake of as food needs to necessarily be offered first to Lord NArAyaNa. For example, it is unacceptable to make sweet pongal with limited amount of ghee for offering to Lord NArAyaNa and subsequently add substantial amounts of ghee while one is partaking of the dish. Thus, the instruction is that whatever we partake of must be offered in identical form to the Lord. Whatever is offered to the Lord must be partaken of as food without any alteration. This is our svarUpam (essential nature). For example, if salt was accidentally not added for the neivedyam submitted in arAdhanam, our elders have established the practice that the food should be partaken of without any additional salt since this is the will of the Lord. It must be noted that the instruction

for offering what we partake to the Lord is not meant for items prohibited by the Sastrams. Everything we partake of must be sanctioned by the Sastras. Anything prohibited by the sastras is unfit for offering to Lord NArAyaNa and is therefore unfit for our consumption. The concept is further illustrated through an episode from the Ayodhya khANDam of the RAmAyaNam. In this instance Lord Rama had taken residence at the precincts of the Chitrakuta hill in a hermitage. Bharata arrived with a large retinue from Ayodhya with the intention of convincing Lord Rama to return to Ayodhya to rule the kingdom. Upon prostrating before Lord Rama, Bharata informs him of Dasharatha attaining Svarga lokam. As soon as Lord Rama heard this, Rama undertook his prescribed duties for Dasharatha along with Sita and Lakshmana. The offerings of tarpaNam and piNDam were duly undertaken by Lord Rama on the banks of the MandAkini river. What was offered by way of piNDam? It is only the food that they were partaking of in the forest. A unique offering from the forest is known as "Ingudhi piNyAkam". In Tamil it is known as "pu~Nga maram". The fruit from this tree was offered as piNDam. Upon completion of the rites to the departed Dasharatha, Lord Rama returned to his hermitage. Shortly thereafter, Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikayi follow and behold the piNDam offering by Lord Rama. Kausalya reasons to herself that Dasharatha was such a great king but such is the state of Lord Rama that he had to offer "Ingudhi piNyAkam" by way of piNDam. Perhaps this is the shastraic mandate. This is entirely in keeping with the shastraic instruction "yadannaH puruSho bhavati tadannAstasya devatAH". Whatever was partaken by Lord Rama in the forest to sustain Himself, was offered as piNDam to Dasharatha. This statement from Kausalya is reproduced verbatim by Valmiki Bhagavan. In a like fashion, we too can only offer what we have by way of offering to Lord NArAyaNa. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the difference between upakAram and upahAram needs to be understood. Here the focus is on upahAram (offering of food to Lord NArAyaNa/Daya Devi). upakAram is the rendering of help, which is quite different from upahAram. Here, Svami Desikan submits an offering of upahAram to Daya Devi. The offering is "mahAparAdhAn upahR^itya" (offering of sins of great magnitude). Here it must be remembered that Svami Desikan exhibited blemishless conduct and thus had no aparadhams to speak of. However, he takes on the state of common individuals like us, who have accumulated mountainous sin-piles and thus submits such an offering to Daya Devi. Accordingly, Sdami Desikan offers Daya Devi his huge sin-pile as upahAram, which he states is the only thing he possesses. The inner meaning is that we have accumulated countless Bhagavad apacArams, BhAgavata apacArams, and nAnavida apacArams, which have incurred the wrath

of Lord NArAyaNa. This offering in entirety is submitted to Daya Devi by way of upahAram, so that they can be destroyed once and for all. Specifically, the mahAparAdhAn refers to BhAgavata apacAram. In the aparAdha parihAra adhikAram of Srimad RahasyatrayasAram, Svami Desikan states that BhAgavata apacAram is equivalent to "rAjadhAra apacAram". In other words, a king may condone offences committed towards him. However, any inappropriate act with his queen is summarily punished and never condoned by the king. Thus, Lord NArAyaNa never tolerates BhAgavata apacAram. This is evident from the AmbarIsha upAkhyANam. Specifically, Lord NArAyaNa states that He is helpless to stop the Sudarshana Cakram that is relentlessly pursuing DurvAsa and instructs the latter to seek relief by offering an apology to AmbarIsha himself.



mahAparAdhAn upahR^itya

In this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan states that "mahAparAdhAn upahR^itya mAtaH prasAdayitu me manastvAm" reflecting the fact that he offers as upahAram his enormous sin-pile. After being satiated by this offering, he expects

that Daya Devi will bestow Her grace upon him. For example, one may have several things in one's possession. Among them there may be one thing that is absolutely worthless. Would such a thing be fit for offering to anyone? However, if this is the only recourse, one makes such an offering with a great deal of regret and trepidation. However, in this instance Svami Desikan makes the offering using the tribute "autsukya pUrvam" (with great enthusiasm). Not only that Svami Desikan declares that Daya Devi will be pleased with this offering and confer Her grace as a result as documented in the salutation "mAtaH prasAdayitu me manastvAm". A number of uttama BhAgavatAs have rendered kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa. These include Tirumala Nambi, AnanthAzhvan and the like. Among them was Kurumbaruttha Nambi, a BhAgavata whose real name is not known. He was a potter. He regularly offered the pots that he made to Lord Srinivasa. In days of yore (35-40 years ago), prasAdam offerings for Lord Srinivasa used to be made in clay utensils. A large number of these utensils used to be stacked in the maDapalli. Thus, if there was a request for prasAdam, it used to come in the clay pots. The muLahOrai prasadam served from these utensils had a unique taste so much so that it was considered a bhAgyam to receive this on specific days at the shrine of Lord Srinivasa. A similar offering could be had at the sannidhi of Sri GovindarAjar after Thomala Sevai in the evening. Replete with ghee, this would be a most delectable prasAdam offering. This used to be served from the "maN-pANDam" (clay pot). In the prakAram of Lord Srinivasa, one can see hemakUpam. In fact, the prakAram itself is known as hemakUpa chenpaka prakAram. Here there used to be a well, with no pulley to draw water. Thus, people used to stand on top of the well and lower a rope tied to a clay pot to get water. This water would then be flowed directly to the maDapalli for use in cooking. This was in vogue more than thirty-five years ago. However, now the hemakupam is closed and adorned with silk perhaps due to kalikalushavashAt. Thus, not even a single vessel of water is collected now from here. Kurumbaruttha Nambi was the BhAgavata, who regularly submitted clay utensils for use in the Sannidhi of Lord Srinivasa. Upon preparing each clay utensil, he would also prepare a flower made from clay and submit along with the vessel for Lord Srinivasa's use. The king of the land, ToNDamAn, used to submit flowers made of gold (svarNa puShpam) for Lord Srinivasa. Both flower offerings were submitted at the same time. In an extremely surprising act, the clay flower submission of Kurumbaruttha Nambi was accepted by Lord Srinivasa on His head, whereas the submission of the king was lying at a distance from Lord Srinivasa. What is the reason for this? It is undoubtedly the unalloyed bhakti of Kurumbaruttha Nambi. This is another instance of Lord Srinivasa graciously

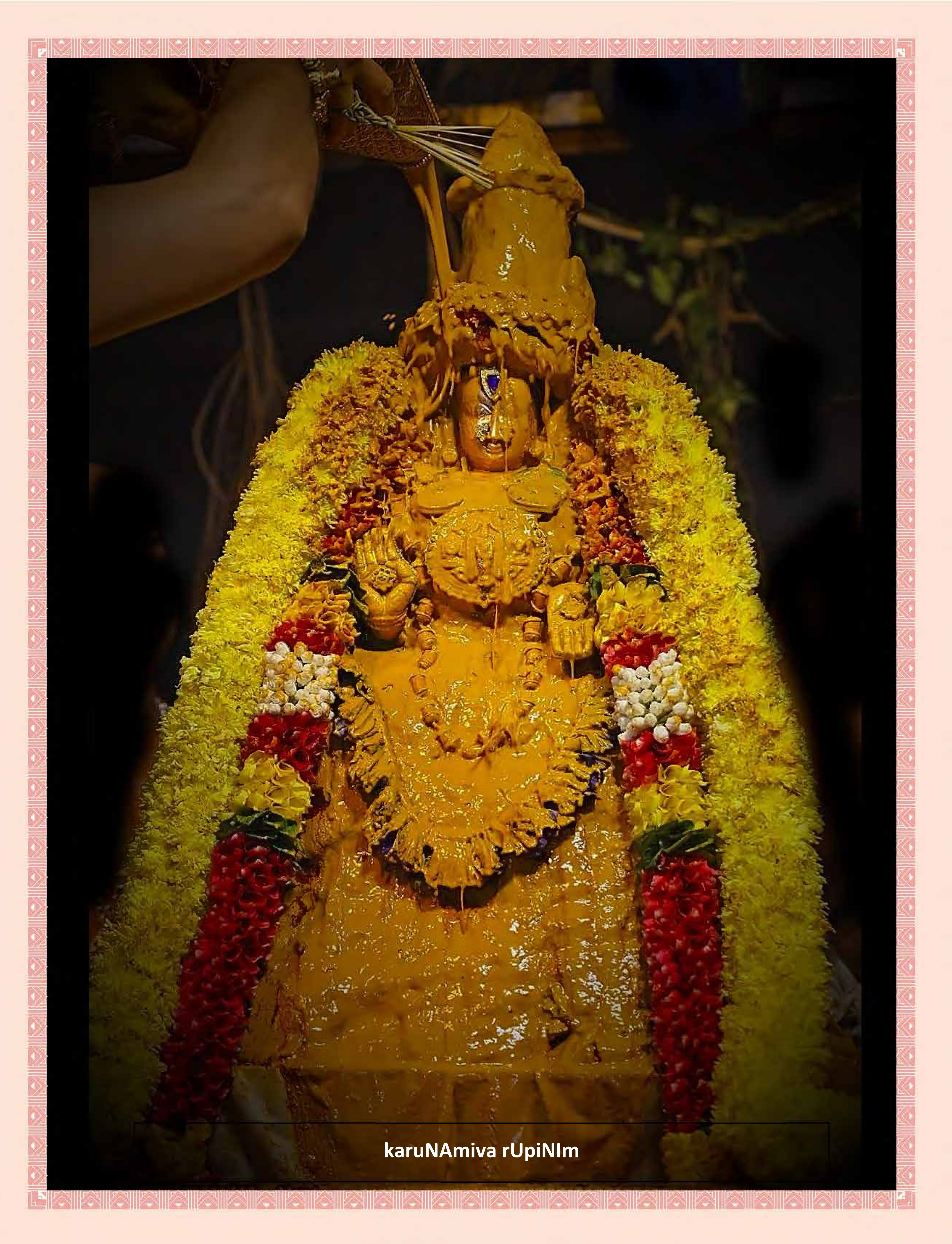


koyamudhAra bhAvaH - SrIranganAyaki tAyAr

accepting an offering of the clay flower from one who could not submit anything else but offered what he had with intense bhakti. In line with this sentiment Svami Desikan reasons that the only thing he has at his disposal is the mountainous store of mahAparAdhams. Thus, Svami Desikan requests Daya Devi to accept the sin-pile as an offering of food from him and in turn bestow Her grace. The submissions of Bharadvaja and Shabari from the RamayaNam become relevant in this context. When Lord Rama visited sage Bharadvaja along with Lakshmana and Sita, he rendered atithi satkAram with whatever he had at that time. However, when Bharata arrived with his large retinue from Ayodhya, sage Bharadvaja arranged for a lavish feast. Again, after the killing of Ravana, when Lord Rama returned in the pushpaka vimAnam which was jampacked with VAnaras, sage Bharadvaja organized an excellent tadIyArAdhanai (feast). Since this feast was quite elaborate and took a long time, Lord Rama in the interim sent Hanuman as His messenger to Bharata to convey the message of His arrival at the Ashramam of Bharadvaja and the feast that was being laid out delaying His arrival at NandigrAma. Shabari too offered atithi satkAram (hospitality) to Lord Rama and Lakshmana. Sage Bharadvaja was able to serve a lavish feast to the large armies due to the power of his tapas as a consequence of which Vishvakarma and Nala arrived to help organize this. However, Shabari was a forest-dweller, who had to make do with whatever was available in the forest. She selected the best among these offerings for Lord Ramaa and Lakshmana. The thought of Lord Rama being an emperor and thus lavished with all sorts of delicacies never crossed her mind. Instead, her sole focus was to gather the best of what is available in the forest and offer it as food for Lord Rama with intense bhakti. The implication here is that Svami Desikan requests Daya Devi to accept his offering of "mahAparAdhAn" in the same manner as Lord Rama accepted the offering of Shabari. Svami Desikan also declares that he is not embarrassed to offer this. Instead, he does so quite enthusiastically in keeping with the salutation "autsukya pUrvam upahR^itya". For example, one may have fruits, which one plans to offer to a distinguished guest, and even in that collection, many of them may be rotting. One may then contemplate whether such fruits are fit for offering to the guest. In Telugu, there is a famous saying that if something is on the verge of spoiling offer it to a Brahmana! This is due to the fact that the Brahmana never complains. Even a beggar may complain about the quality of the offering but a Brahmana never utters a word. If a fruit is required for neivedyam, even if the offering is on the verge of spoiling, the Brahmana will respectfully offer it to Lord NArAyaNa. In a like fashion, it may be asked if the lowly offering that Svami Desikan is proposing would be insulting to Daya Devi. Here Daya Devi answers this by noting


mAtaH prasAdayitu micChati me manastvAm

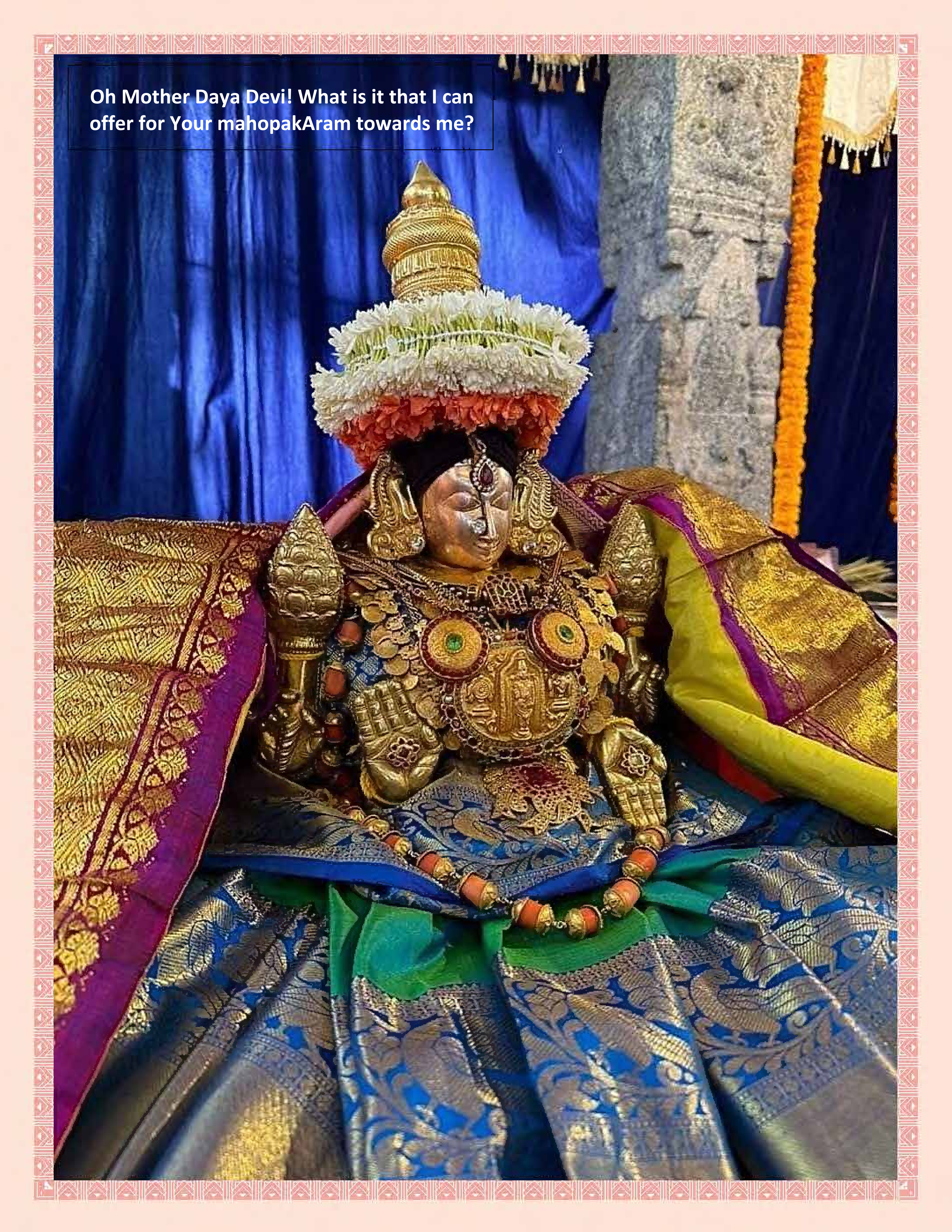
that “You are offering Me what you have. I accept it with great relish”. The tribute mAtaH prasAdayitu micChati me manastvAm” from this Daya Satakam verse reflects the fact that Svami Desikan’s mind is fixed on Daya Devi. With this thought he offers what is in his possession by way of food offering to Daya Devi. His hope is that Daya Devi will be pleased with this offering and shower Her grace upon him. The use of vartamAna kAlam (present tense) is significant here. This is denoted by the usage “icChati”. It must be remembered that Svami Desikan’s offering is not like a fruit or flower. Instead, it is a submission of his huge sin-pile. He has already performed sharaNAgati for Moksham. During this act, the entire sancita pApam is wiped out. After performance of sharaNAgati, if one engages in buddhipUrvaka papam, this too can be expiated by prayashcitta prapatti. There too the offering is one of sin-pile. This is destroyed by Daya Devi. Thus, no matter how many times prAyashcitta prapatti is undertaken, each time the offering is one of a massive sin-pile. However, Daya Devi unfailingly destroys the sin-pile each time. This is the underlying message from this Daya Satakam verse. This sentiment has been expressed in verse 70 through the salutation “bharanyAsacChanna prabalavR^ijina prAbhR^itabhR^rutA pratiprasthanaM te shR^itinagara shR^i~ngATaka juShaH”- (My sin-pile is collected in a platter covered by the cloth of Bharanyasam and submitted as an offering to You, Daya Devi. You, being the Empress of the universe, come out of Your palace at the meeting of four streets (described by the shR^itis) and receive this offering from me.) However, there is an important difference between the two offerings. The offering in verse 70 pertains to the Prapatti performed for the purpose of gaining Moksham. In this instance though the use of present tense denotes the ongoing performance of Prapatti, which is a reference to PrAyashcitta Prapatti. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi destroys the accrued sins at the time of performance of PrayAshcitta Prapatti. When something is offered by way of food to a recipient, it is either accepted with great relish or is set aside for possible consumption later. These offerings are not necessarily partaken of immediately. For example, when a dear one invites us to a wedding, we would look at the invitation with great enthusiasm. On the other hand, if it is someone else that we are not that very close with gives us a wedding invitation, we would set it aside for later viewing. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse, the central question is whether Daya Devi accepts the offering of “mahAparAdhAn” or not. The discussion of Patrikai reminded aDiyEn about an incident that will be narrated briefly. During his pUrvAshramam, Srimad Villivalam Azhagiyasingar, the 45th pIThAdipati at Sri Ahobila Matham, celebrated his shashTiyabdha pUrti (60th birthday). He and his Devi arrived in Navalpakkam to invite Sri U.Ve. Ayya



karuNAmiva rUpiNIm

Devanathachariar Svamin for this occasion. Srimad Azhagiyasingar after prostrating before Sri Ayya Svamin, submitted the Patrikai, which was in three languages - Sanskrit, Tamil, and English. Sri Ayya Svamin immediately viewed the Patrikai from start to finish with great interest. Upon completion of this task, Sri Ayya Svami enquired about the well-being of Srimad Azhagiyasingar with a pleasant smile and remarked "romba santhOSham". Later on, after ascending the pITham at Sri Ahobila Matham, Srimad Villivalam Azhagiyasingar fondly recalled the anugraham of Sri Ayya Svami during this occasion and considered it his unique good fortune. The point being made is that when the Patrikai is submitted to a great AcArya and it is viewed with great enthusiasam, it brings unique cheer to the offeror. In the context of the submission to Daya Devi, we are unsure of how it will be received since the submission is one of a mountainous sin-pile, nevertheless offered quite enthusiastically. However, this offering is accepted by Daya Devi with great relish and is partaken of without wasting even a single morsel as documented in the tribute "Alihya tAn niravasheShamalabdha tR^iptiH". For instance, when one is offered prasadam in a temple and partakes of it immediately it gives rise to great happiness for those distributing the prasadam. The taste of the hot prasadam too is unique. In this instance, Daya Devi consumes the offering of "mahAparADhAn" in its entirety without leaving behind a trace. The usage "AlihyatAn" deserves examination. It is the act of licking the food with one's tongue indicative of the relish with which the food is partaken. For example, when one is offered honey it is consumed to an extent with great enjoyment. The remnant sticking to one's hand is partaken of by licking the hand with one's tongue, indicative of the fine taste of the honey and the relish with which it is consumed. It is in this manner that Daya Devi partakes of the offering of "mahAparAdhAn"- niravasheSham (without any remanants). Her consumption of this offering seems to suggest that this is insufficient. If water is offered to a cow in a vessel and the cow takes to it with relish, not even a drop of water remains. In fact, the cow uses its tongue to clean up the vessel of any trace of water, almost causing a hole in the vessel. This is the manner in which Daya Devi consumes our offering of "mahAparAdhAn". The next issue is whether Daya Devi is satiated from the offering. In this instance the answer is no as documented in the tribute "alabdha tR^iptiH". In other words, Daya Devi partakes of the offering as if it were a trifle and is hungry for more. This is captured in the "tAmyasi" tribute of this Daya Satakam verse, denoting the fact that Daya Devi becomes pale with hunger. For example, if one who is hungry is given a limited offering with the promise of more to come, the pangs of hunger still persist. Daya Devi's state is similar in that even after consuming the humongous sin-pile, She is

hungry for more. This seems to mirror the salutation of Sri ParAshara BhaTTar to Sri RanganAyaki tAyAr. "aishvaryamakSharagatiM paramaM padaM vA kasmaicidanjali bharaM vahatevitIrya" (A passer by at the Temple of Ranganatha happened to offer by sheer accident a salutation with folded hands to Sri RanganAyaki tAyAr. This act on his part caused Her to declare that She stands ready to grant him all material wealth, kaivalyam, and even moksham itself. Yet She thinks that She has not done enough for the enormous trouble this individual has taken in submitting his salutation with folded hands.) Sri ParAshara Bhattar exclaims "koyamudhAra bhAvaH" to express the fact that he is at a loss of words to describe the compassion of tAyAr. Daya Devi too is of a similar disposition as Ranganayaki tAyAr since She is no different from the latter. Thus, even if it is "mahAparAdhAn" that is offered, since it is offered by "Her Child" She consumes it all without leaving a trace on account of Her great affection (vAtsalyam) for Her children. This can also be interpreted as "nindA stuti" (a work of praise which is actually a scolding) or "stuti nindA" (scolding which is construed as praise). In this instance it is the former. It is intended to bring out the fact that no matter how grave our offence is, Daya Devi consumes it as if it were a trifle. Also, Daya Devi has rendered a mahopakAram for us. Despite our incapability for offering anything in return for Her monumental act, She still exudes affection for us. This is the mahopakAram rendered by Daya Devi. This act of Daya Devi-not being satiated no matter how large a sin-pile offering is submitted and appearing pale - is Svami Desikan's ninda stuti. In other words, it is praise in the form of an apparent abuse. The salutation "vR^iShagirIsha dhR^itA daye tvam" captures the fact that Daya Devi is borne by Lord Srinivasa. Lord Srinivasa confers the four puruShArthAs. This is the main reason for His arrival at the Tiruvenkatam hill. The lofty role of Daya Devi too is highlighted in this context. She is the one that enables Lord Srinivasa to confer the four puruShArthAs. Without Her, Lord Srinivasa is incapable of granting anything. Daya Devi of such loftiness, joyfully accepts the offering of "mahAparAdhAn" as if it were a delicacy and devours it completely. Svami Desikan declares that there cannot be a more astonishing act than this captured in the tribute "tAmyas yaho" of this Daya Satakam verse. If one approaches somebody for a favor and the request is immediately granted, the joy that arises is matchless. In the context of Daya Devi, the instantaneous consumption of the offering of "mahAparAdhAn" gives rise to similar joy. Not only that, Daya Devi seems to enquire if there is more to be partaken of. This is the import of the present Daya Satakam verse. Svami NammAzhvar glorifies Lord Srinivasa as "ulakamuNDa peruvAyA" (one who swallowed the entire universe). In a like manner, Daya Devi too after having


Oh Mother Daya Devi! What is it that I can offer for Your mahopakAram towards me?

partaken of the humongous sin-pile remains unsatiated and craves for more. It may be helpful to recall here the "apUrNa kukShiH" tribute from verse 29 of the Daya Satakam. The relationship between Daya Devi and Svami Desikan can be viewed as that of one between a mother and son. Andal glorifies Lord Krishna as "yacotai iLam cinkam". If a child is passive, there is nothing unusual and makes for a boring narrative. On the other hand, if the child is constantly up to mischief of some kind, the acts become enjoyable. The usage "iLam cinkam" denotes that the lion cub enjoys the company of its mother. In turn Yashodha takes delight in the acts of Lord Krishna. In a like manner, Daya Devi's enjoyment of our acts, albeit one of sin, needs to be appreciated. If one having PrakR^iti sambandham does not engage in any violation of the Sastram, Daya Devi's affection for them is nothing remarkable. However, if one engaging in all sorts of sinful acts, is favored and graced by Daya Devi despite the despicable acts, it is truly astounding. An important point of note is that this verse could give rise to the misleading notion that Lord Srinivasa enjoys the faults of jivans so much so that He/Daya Devi partake of these faults with great relish. Such a position cannot be further from the truth with respect to the import of this verse. First off, merely because Daya Devi partakes of the offering of "mahAparAdhAn" with great delight, it does not provide the license to willfully engage in sinful acts under the pretext of offering delectable food to Daya Devi. Instead, the purport of this verse is to highlight the loftiness of sharaNAgati, which is capable of destroying the gravest of sins. In the sharaNAgati dIpika, Svami Desikan declares "brahmANDalakShashatakoTigaNAnanatAn ekakShaNe viparivartya vilajjamAnAm matpAparAshimathane madhudarpahantrIM shaktiM niyu~NKShva sharaNAgatavatsala tvam" (Lord Deepa Prakasha is extremely fond of His sharaNAgatAs as denoted by the tribute "sharaNAgata vatsala". Due to this fact, He exudes affection for sharaNAgatAs. His strength is so great that the apacArams in this entire universe that number in the lakhs and hundreds of crores (extremely large) are destroyed in a single moment. Svami Desikan appeals to Lord Deepa Prakasha to exercise this strength on his sins. When the strength displayed in destroying Madhu and Kaitaba is employed against his sins, they are ruthlessly destroyed.) Here, Svami Desikan views Lord Deepa Prakasha as the Supreme Being rather than as his mother. However, there is a difference in the manner of Daya Devi destroying one's sins and Lord NArAyaNa accomplishing the same task. When Lord NArAyaNa undertakes the task, He demonstrates His supremacy as the emperor of all He surveys. However, Daya Devi partakes of the sins as a delectable offering of food and destroys them. Both Lord NArAyaNa and Daya Devi perform the same task. However, this does not imply that Daya Devi takes to the offering of

sins with relish in the spirit of enjoying the faults of the jivan. This is definitely against the tenets of the sampradAyam. Instead, the correct perspective is the fact that Daya Devi destroys the sins of those who have performed sharaNAgati. aDiyEn recounts an incident that took place when aDiyEn went to the temple of Lord VaradarAja to offer prostrations. That morning, there was not much of a crowd and thus aDiyE could enjoy the sevai in solitude. It happened to be a kaNNADi arai sevai on a Hasta nakshatram day. The Bhattar Svamin welcomed aDiyEn for sevai. aDiyEn rendered a few stotrams by way of tribute to Lord VaradarAja while offering prostration. aDiyEn happened to go empty handed. However, such was aDiyEn's bhAgyam that the Arcakar Svamin gave aDiyEn the flowers submitted to Lord Varadaraja and fruits offered as neivedyam. aDiyEn was thrilled to receive this anugraham and thought even though aDiyEn had gone to the Temple empty-handed, the compassion of Varadaraja conferred a great blessing. However, upon completing this upanyAsam, aDiyEn realizes that aDiyEn did not go empty-handed. aDiyEn had a great sin-pile that was submitted by way of offering to Lord VaradarAja. The grace of Daya Devi ensured its acceptance and the result was the anugraham from Him. In a like manner, it is aDiyEn's sincere wish that all of us are rid of our sins by Daya Devi and become fitting receptacles for the grace of Lord Srinivasa, and conclude the exposition of this verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Mother Daya Devi! What is it that I can offer for Your mahopakAram towards me? I only have my huge sin-pile, which I enthusiastically submit to You by way of a food offering. However, despite the lowly nature of this offering, You take to it with great relish and devour it. It seems that this large offering is insufficient for You. In spite of consuming it all without leaving behind a single morsel, literally by licking with Your tongue every bit, You appear famished. You are supported by Lord Srinivasa. Two points of note should be observed:

1. The usage that Daya Devi appears famished is Svami Desikan's ninda stuti for Daya Devi. It appears as though Svami Desikan seems to scold Daya Devi for appearing famished. However, in reality he is wonderstruck by Her ability to destroy the most enormous of sin-piles as if it were trivial and even more so since Daya Devi exudes affection for these jivans despite their sins.

2. This verse can give the misleading interpretation of doSha bhogyatvam for Daya Devi due to the usage of partaking of the sin-pile offering with great relish. This is not so. Neither does it afford the jivan the license to indulge in sinful acts at will so that a generous offering can be made to Daya Devi. In fact, Svami Desikan

cautions against committing any sinful act upon the performance of Prapatti and discusses this issue in great detail in the Srimad Rahasyatrayaasaram. This verse is instead intended to highlight the glory of sharaNAgati, which is capable of destroying the most heinous of sins. Therefore, there is absolutely no place for doSha bhogyatvam in this context."



Slokam 98

जह्याद्वृषाचलपतिः प्रतिघेऽपि न त्वां

घर्मोपतप्त इव शीतळतामुदन्वान् ।

सा मामरुन्तुदभरन्यसनानुवृत्तिः

तद्वीक्षणैः स्पृश दये तव केळिपद्मैः ॥९८ ॥

jahyAdvR^iShAchalapatiH pratighe(a)pi na tvAM

gharmopatapta iva shItaLAtAmudanvAn|

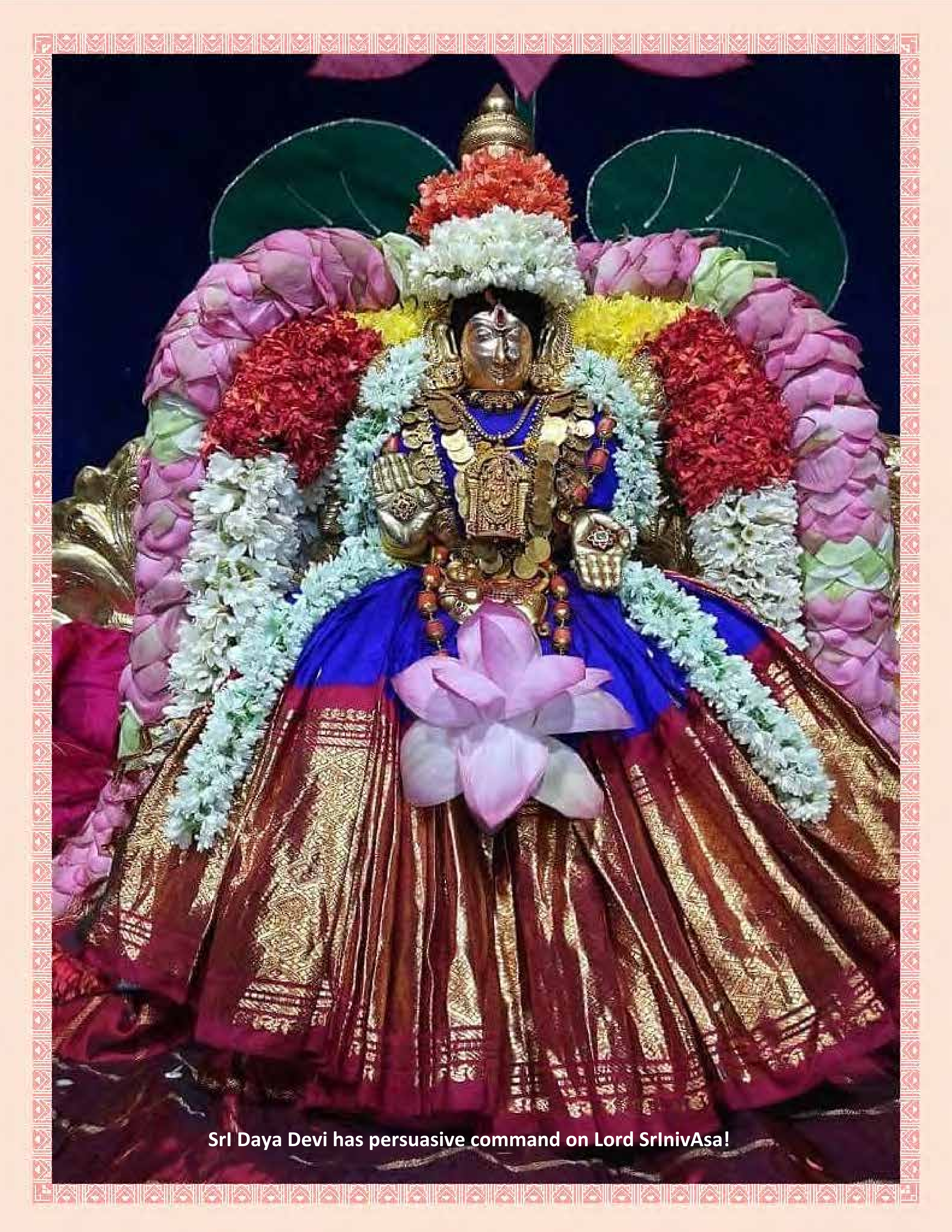
sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH

tadvIkShaNaiH spR^isha daye tava keLipadmaiH||98



We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"The previous verse highlighted the offering of the sin-piles as a food offering, which was joyfully accepted by Daya Devi, resulting in their destruction. Furthermore, it was pointed out that there is absolutely no place for dosha bhogyatvam in this context. Instead, the correct purport was documented as one of Daya Devi ruthlessly destroying the sin-pile of sharaNAgatAs, rendering them perfect receptacles for the grace of Lord Srinivasa. There is an inherent flaw with the dosha bhogyatvam concept. Specifically, it encourages one to commit more and more sins since a large offering can be made to Daya Devi. This is only detrimental to one's sharaNAgati as Svami Desikan outlines the code of conduct in the Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram for Prapannas in the post-prapatti period. Therefore, the correct perspective is that no matter how great one's sin-pile is, Daya Devi ensures its destruction upon their performance of sharaNAgati. The implication is that even for such a being who has an enormous sin-pile, Daya Devi exudes Her affection. Daya Devi is quite delighted to hear Svami Desikan's tribute in this regard. This is due to the fact that Svami Desikan's verses in this decad explain fairly complicated and intricate messages from the shastras in a simple-to-understand manner. Daya Devi now desires to hear more of the exposition of the shastraic messages and thereby hear Her praise from Svami Desikan. Motivated by this thought Daya Devi posits a question to Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! You have glorified Me in 97 verses. In reality these need to be directed elsewhere. Indeed



SrI Daya Devi has persuasive command on Lord SrInivAsa!

you have performed sharaNAgati to Me for moksham in verse 60 and again in the tribute “vishvopakAramiti nAma sadA duhAnAm” you have again resorted to Me for Prayaschitta Prapatti seeking relief from buddhipUrvaka pApam. Again, in the salutation “santanyamAnamaparAdhagaNam vicintya” you have sought My help to destroy the sins that cause you to indulge in buddhipUrvaka pApam. Although you have requested Me for help with these items, I am merely a quality (guNam), that seeks refuge in Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, everything that you have submitted to Me rightfully needs to be submitted to Lord Srinivasa. Don’t you agree?” Svami Desikan is quite shaken by these words of Daya Devi. How could he be wrong in directing his tribute to Daya Devi in 97 verses? A practical example helps illustrate the matter more clearly. A husband and wife both go to work. When it comes to matters of the house, sometimes they act independently, while at other times they arrive at a decision after discussion. In a like manner, we may appreciate the role of Daya Devi.

To start with Daya is a guNam (quality). However, the equivalence of Daya to Mahalakshmi Thayar has been established. Using this equivalence, Svami Desikan rendered 97 verses in Her praise. However, even if Daya Devi declares that She is a mere guNam, a few other associations need to be made. In a day-to-day setting, if someone approached the lady of the house for help with something, she would state that this will be done after she consults with her husband, due to a pact that she has with him. However, it does not imply that she is incapable of satisfying the request. Neither is the request to her a waste. This is merely a manner of according respect to the man of the house. However, there are other instances where the need is immediate and struggling individuals approach the lady of the house for help with their suffering. Here, she cannot afford to wait until her husband’s arrival and instead she needs to act immediately. In such an instance, she rushes to the succor of the suffering individual right away. In another instance, if an utsavam for perumal arrives at one’s doorstep when the man of the house is away, the lady of the house would not desist from offering something by way of food to the Lord due the fact that her husband is away. If she does so, the man of house will only rebuke her for the lapse. Likewise, if a great BhAgavata arrives at one’s house when the man of the house is away, it is the duty of the lady of the house to render atithi satkAram to the BhAgavata and not wait for the arrival of her husband. Thus, in some instances the lady of the house acts independently while in others she demonstrates her complete dependence on her husband. In the context of Daya Devi, the question that arises is whether She can act independently or if She is completely dependent on Lord Srinivasa. Is She capable of protecting those who

perform sharaNAgati at Her feet? In this instance Daya Devi seems to suggest that while She is quite delighted by Svami Desikan's tribute, She is incapable of granting everything that he has sought and that he needs to submit the same request to Lord Srinivasa. This is akin to approaching an influential figure in an organization for help. The individual patiently hears the request and tributes from the seeker. After the seeker has finished and made the request, the individual states that he is no longer affiliated with that organization and is therefore unable to render the help that is sought. Thus, someone else needs to be approached. The seeker would be quite discouraged by the wasted effort and would exhibit a great deal of regret. Daya Devi is quite anxious to test Svami Desikan's disposition in this regard and hence Her question to Svami Desikan. Svami Desikan's reply is documented in verse 98.

Prior to delving into the exposition of the verse, it is important to understand the relationship between Mahalakshmi Thayar and Lord Srinivasa. This relationship is denoted by "apR^ithak siddha visheShaNam", namely Lord Srinivasa and Mahalakshmi are inseparable from each other. This is best understood from Svami NammAzhvar's mangalasasanam for Lord Srinivasa through the tribute "akalakillEn iRayum enRu alarmElmankai uRai mArbA". This salutation attests to the fact that Thayar is never separated from Lord Srinivasa even for a moment. If one looks for the visheSham for Lord Srinivasa, it is His role as the Supreme Brahman, engaged in the tasks of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe as described by the Vedas. Likewise, His status as shriyaH pati confers upon Him another unique visheSham. Thus, it is a lakShaNam for Lord Srinivasa. In a like manner, the relationship between Daya Devi and Lord Srinivasa is one of "apR^ithak siddha visheShaNam". Even if Daya is considered as a mere guNam, it is impossible to behold Her without Lord Srinivasa. The relationship between Lord Narayana and Mahalakshmi Thayar is further expounded upon in the Srimad Ramayanam through the tribute "bhAskareNa prabhA yathA". The Sun cannot be separated from its radiance. In a like manner, one can never separate Lord Rama from Sita Devi. Svami Desikan describes the relationship in the MahAvIra Vaibhavam tribute "praBhAvAn sItayA devya paramavyoma bhAskaraH" So too Daya Devi is inseparable from Lord Srinivasa. Thus, if one pays tribute to Daya Devi it is equivalent to glorifying Lord Srinivasa and vice versa. Using this shastraic support Svami Desikan answers Daya Devi with the statement that "I have not done anything wrong in glorifying You. There is nothing that is out of reach for You. I have not performed sharaNAgati to You in the manner of Lord Rama performing sharaNAgati to Samudra Raja. This is due to the fact that the shAstram explicitly forbids performance of sharaNAgati to

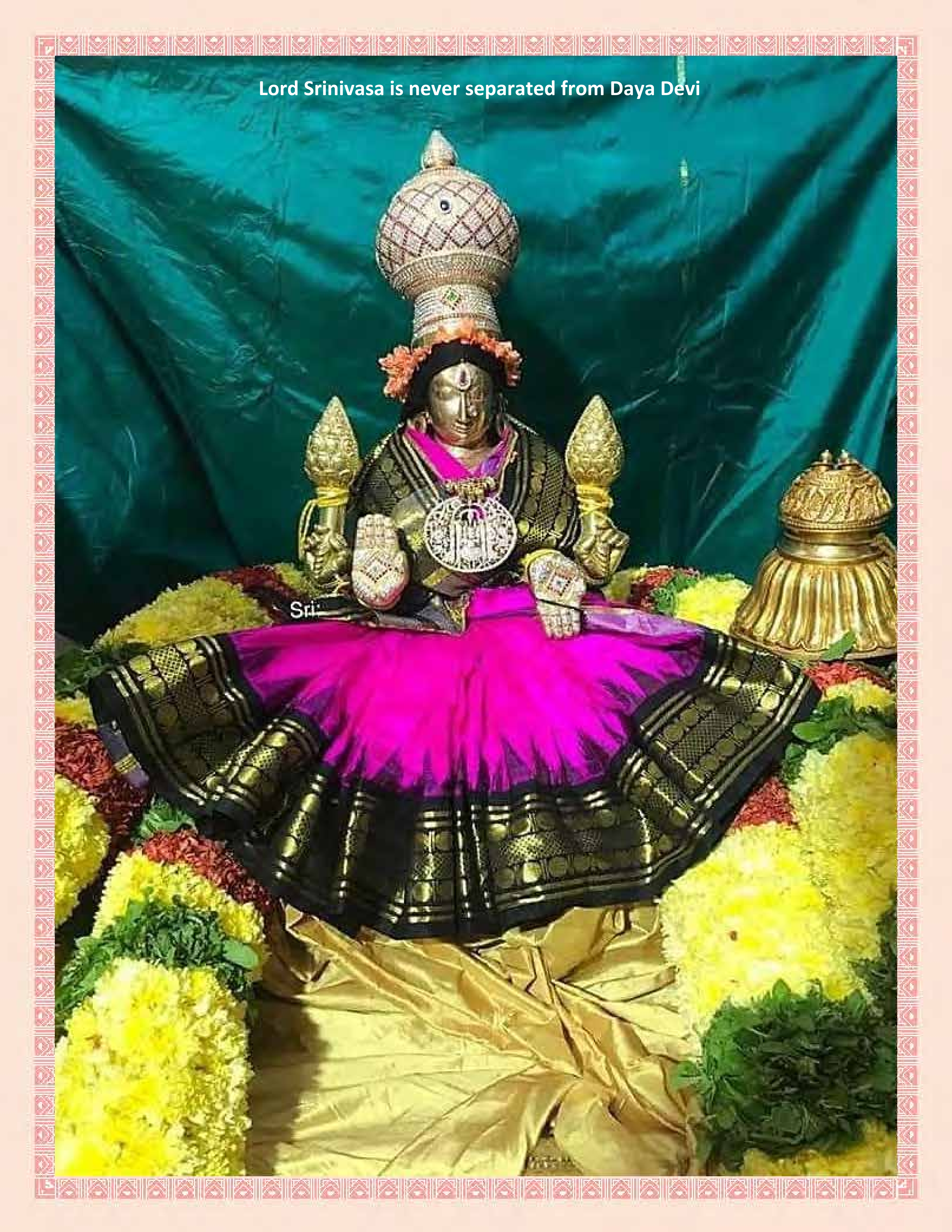

Please devise a scheme to touch me with the glances of the Lord's eyes

one that is incapable of protecting the supplicant. If such an act is undertaken it is doomed to failure. This is the reason for Lord Rama's unsuccessful sharaNAgati to Samudra Raja. Even today, when one visits TirupullANi, Lord Rama is seen as darbha shayanar reflecting the austerity He undertook in the performance of sharaNAgati. Svami Desikan argues that his sharaNAgati is not performed at the feet of an incapable person, implying that Daya Devi is a pre-eminent personage." This message from the shAstram is captured in this Daya Satakam verse which is "jahyAdvR^iShAchalapatiH pratighe(a)pi na tvAM gharmopatapta iva shItaLAtAmudanvAn sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH tadvIkShaNaiH spR^isha daye tava keLipadmaiH". The implication here is that one who is ignorant of the shAstrams can be easily fooled by the words of Daya Devi. However, not Svami Desikan, who has mastered the shAstras. Svami Desikan explicitly states that "I am fully aware of Your prowess, oh Daya Devi! Therefore, it is inappropriate for You to use these words." No doubt Lord Srinivasa grants all fruits in keeping with the Vedanta Sutra statement "phalam atha upapattateH" Yagam, dhAnam, and Karmam are undertaken. Yagams are directed towards specific deities. However, when it comes to conferring the fruits of the Yagams, it is not the deities themselves that confer this. Instead, it is the supreme Lord Narayana, who is resident as the indweller in these deities. This fact is well documented in the shastras. When it comes to Karmas, we need to go no further than the Godha Stuti tribute "karmAnubandhi phaladAnaratasya bhartuH" of Svami Desikan to understand that Lord Narayana alone confers the fruits of all Karmas. Thus, He becomes the Phala pradAta. Daya Devi's question is motivated by these statements from the shAstram, which unequivocally state that Lord Narayana alone grants all fruits. Svami Desikan agrees with this statement of Daya Devi but notes eloquently that a tribute/request to Her is the same as submitting the tribute/request to Lord Srinivasa. Thus, it makes no difference whether the benefit is requested of Daya Devi or Lord Srinivasa. This subtle point may be lost on those who are not well versed with the Shastrams but not Svami Desikan. Therefore, Svami Desikan appeals to Daya Devi to desist from this attempt. Thus Svami Desikan quite emphatically states that "Having performed sharaNAgati to You, oh Daya Devi! even if You instruct me to perform sharaNAgati to Lord Srinivasa, I shall not do this." This is due to the fact that performance of sharaNAgati is dictated by the brahmAstra nyAyam. It must be remembered that the BrahmAstra can only be used once against an individual. When invoked again, it loses its efficacy. Due to the BrahmAstra nyAyam that prevails, once sharaNAgati is performed at the feet of Daya Devi, who is inseparable from Lord Srinivasa, another sharaNAgati for the

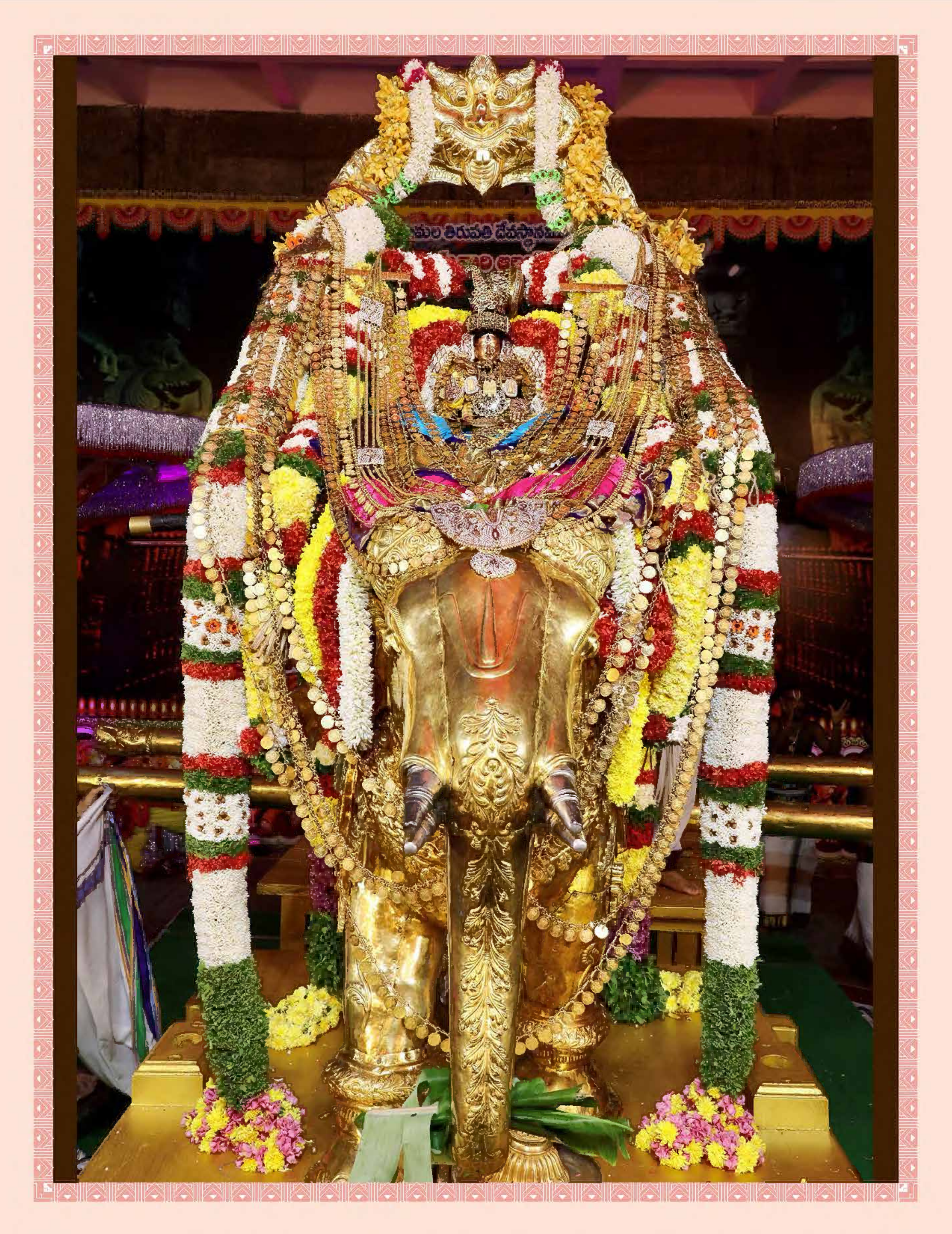


Daya Devi is delighted by our sharaNAgati to Her Lord!

same purpose to Lord Srinivasa is forbidden. Therefore, SVami Desikan quite emphatically states that he will not undertake the performance of sharaNAgati for Moksham to Lord Srinivasa. To illustrate his position, Svami Desikan uses an example from the MahAbhArata. King Shantanu was the father of Bhishma. After his demise and attaining Svarga lokam, he wanted to test the sincerity with which Bhishma performed the rites for the pitrus. During the performance of shrAddham, the piNDam needs to be submitted by placing it on the ground. However, in this instance when Bhishma was performing the shrAddham, Shantanu stretched out his hand as if to ask for the piNDam. Bhishma was performing the shrAddham with utmost devotion, which pleased Shantanu. Therefore, rather than placing the piNDam on the ground, Shantanu thought it would be more appropriate to accept this offering in his hand. The shAstram is unequivocal in instructing us to regard departed ancestors as pitR^is and provide offerings accordingly. The shAstrams explicitly forbid regarding them as anyone else and making concessions. Knowing the shAstram fully well, Bhishma did not make the offering in Shantanu's hand. Instead, he placed the piNDam on the ground. This instance is intended to highlight Bhishma's knowledge of the shAstras and his steadfastness in practicing the shAstraic mandates. In a like manner, Svami Desikan too illustrates an important meaning from the shAstras in this context. "sakR^it kR^ita shAstra" is the dictum for sharaNAgati indicating that it must only be performed once. A second sharaNAgati for the same purpose is thus expressly forbidden. In accordance with Svami Desikan's tribute "prAyaH prapadhane pumsAm paunAH puNyam nivAraNam" sharaNAgati has to be performed only once. Specifically with respect to this tribute, Svami Desikan enjoys the anubhavam of Lord RanganAtha, whose hand is in a slightly raised posture (abhaya mudra) indicating that performance of sharaNAgati once is sufficient and that a repeat performance for the same purpose is unnecessary. The implication is that Lord RanganAtha needs no reminder that the supplicant has performed surrender and that Lord RanganAtha will redeem him at the appropriate time. In the context of this Daya Satakam verse Svami Desikan is conveying the same message in that sharaNAgati to Daya Devi has been performed, which is equivalent to a surrender to Lord Srinivasa. Thus a repeat sharaNAgati is forbidden. Therefore, the tribute "jahyAdvR^iShAchalapatiH pratighe(a)pi na tvAM gharmopatapta iva shItaLAtAmudanvAn" from this Daya Satakam verse indicates that Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Daya Devi. "pratighe(a)pi tvAM na jahyAdvR^iShAchalapatiH" is the anvaya kramam (prose order) for this tribute. This mirrors the salutation from Svami NammAzhvar's mangalasasanam "akalakillEn iRayum enRu alarmEl mankai uRai mArbA". The Azhvar's tribute indicates that


Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Daya Devi
Sri

Thayar is never separated from Lord Srinivasa even for a moment. In this instance, Svami Desikan reverses the order and states that Lord Srinivasa is never for a moment separated from Daya Devi. "pratigham" denotes anger. Daya Devi is never given to anger. Only the Lord can get angry at times. Does this imply the absence of Daya in those instances? Svami Desikan declares in this verse most definitely not. Even in times of anger, Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Daya Devi. This can be understood from the Ramayanam. After Sita Devi was kidnapped by Ravana, Lord Rama arrives at the hermitage. He searches everywhere for Sita Devi and cannot find Her. He enquires pleadingly of the Vana Devatas, the beasts of the forest and the trees if they saw Sita. After getting no clues of any kind, Lord Rama in a fit of anger declares that He would turn the earth upside down in His attempt to locate Sita Devi. Lakshmana calms down Lord Rama with words to the effect that intellect rather than emotions should guide His actions. The extraordinary rage displayed by Lord Rama was intended to highlight His position as "AtmAnaM mAnuShaM manye rAmaM dasharathAtmajam" (I am a mere mortal, the son of Dasharatha even though all the Devas including Brahma declare that I am the Supreme Being). Thus, it was an act intended to conform with the conduct of normal human beings. It is not as if the all-knowing Lord was unaware of the happenings (kidnapping of Sita by Ravana). Nor did it take away from His ability to retrieve Her in a trice without lifting His finger. Neither does it mean that Sita was separated from Him although externally it appears as if He is grieving over the separation. However, in His avataram as Rama, He displayed all the emotions of a normal human being. Lord Krishna's anger is described in the salutation "dhyaupatet pR^itivIshIryata". When questioned about whether His promise would hold true or not, Lord Krishna was greatly angered. Specifically, He states that when it comes to upholding His assurance to those who have surrendered to Him, even if the world turns upside down with the skies meeting the earth, His promise to sharaNAgatAs will be upheld. Again, in this instance during the time of anger, Lord Krishna was not separated from Daya Devi. The anger came about due to His anxiety to protect those who have surrendered to Him rather than out of a desire to destroy someone. Sometimes the man of the house may exhibit a stern disposition towards his children and may seem to be quite harsh. However, internally, his love for the children exceeds even that of his wife-the mother of the children. The harsh disposition is intended to convey the message that he cannot be taken for granted by the children and that no leniency will be shown when it comes to non-conformance with rules of the house. Thus, even the Lord's anger is merely an external display and not His essential nature. The message of this Daya



Satakam verse is that even during those times of anger, Daya never leaves the Lord. Svami Desikan makes the point by way of an example in this context through the tribute "gharmopatapta iva shItaLAtAmudanvAn". udanvan denotes the ocean. In the scorching summer heat with no trace of rain, even the ocean waters seem hot at the surface. However, the coolness inherent to the ocean waters becomes apparent when one gets deeper into the ocean. Thus, the heat in the ocean waters is superficial, while internally, the ocean retains its coolness. Likewise, when one goes to a lake for snAnam early in the evening, the surface waters may seem hot. However, taking an immersion a little deeper gives a soothing feeling from the cool waters. In a like manner, the essential nature of Lord Srinivasa is one of Daya. Superficially like the hot ocean water, He may seem angry. However, His inherent nature is replete with compassion much like the same ocean water. Thus, Svami Desikan establishes the position that even in times of anger, Lord Srinivasa is never separated from Daya Devi. This establishes the "apR^ithak siddha visheShaNam" characterizing the relationship between Lord Srinivasa and Daya Devi. Thus, it is apparent that an appeal submitted to Daya Devi is equivalent to the same appeal submitted to Lord Srinivasa. Specifically, sharaNAgati undertaken at the feet of Daya Devi is equivalent to sharaNAgati performed to Lord Srinivasa. Svami Desikan therefore answers Daya Devi's question with irrefutable shAstraic support and firmly states that he cannot perform another sharaNAgati for the same purpose to Lord Srinivasa. Daya Devi is quite pleased with Svami Desikan's answer. However, She submits once more "There is one thing that is quite bothersome to Me. It is the repeated performance of sharaNAgati. This has been done once for the purpose of gaining Moksham. However, after this you engage in sinful acts and each time perform sharaNAgati by way of expiation. It greatly pains Me when you submit to Me that I must redeem you from these repeated sinful acts." The appearance of those submitting to Daya Devi an appeal for sharaNAgati is described in the tribute "sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH" of this Daya Satakam verse. This tribute captures the fact that the supplicant is utterly helpless and incapable of protecting himself due to lack of knowledge and lack of strength. Furthermore, the individual declares that he has nothing in his possession and is therefore in abject poverty. Furthermore, he does not have any other recourse besides Lord Srinivasa/Daya Devi (in this instance). The implication of Daya Devi's statement is that it is extremely distressing for Her to behold these suffering jivans arriving before Her and seeking Her help. The message from the salutation "sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH" indicates that the request for a repeat prapatti (Prayaschitta Prapatti) causes a lot of distress for Daya Devi. An analogy is

useful to understand Daya Devi's position in this regard. If one approaches a person of authority for help and receives the requested assistance, and then later on arrives at the door of the same person complaining that a number of difficulties arose and that the help rendered did not serve the purpose, it becomes infuriating to the person of authority. In fact, even the approach a second time is wrong on all counts. Due to the fact that they have been helped once by the person of authority, they should not return again seeking the same favor. The help rendered too should be of such magnitude that the recipient does not return seeking the same favor again. This is termed as vaLLal in Tamil - namely fulfilling. Thus, in the context of Daya Devi's predicament, when one who has received Her anugraham returns again seeking the same help from Her, it implies that there was something lacking in Her original help. This causes Her great distress since She has showered Her grace in a most benevolent manner the first time. Thus, in a pointed manner Daya Devi addresses Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! The repeat performance of sharaNAgati causes Me great distress. I am unable to withstand this, since it implies that something was lacking when I accepted and graced the first Prapatti." This raises the important question of whether performance of Prayaschitta Prapatti is not required. It is not that Prayaschitta Prapatti should not be undertaken but instead it is a submission to eliminate the causes for buddhipUrvaka pApam, namely papArambaka papam. In fact, this is part of our daily prayer while rendering the nyAsa dashakam salutation "nityaM niraparAdheShu kaimkaryeShu niyu~NkShvamAm". No doubt we need to be engaged in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. This body is conferred upon us precisely to engage in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. "vyarthaM vikShu vayaM gataH" is a statement of intense regret. Upon awaking, one must feel that the time until yesterday was wasted. So much kaimkaryam could have been undertaken in this time. At least from now on more opportunities for Bhagavad kaimkaryam should arise and cause us to engage in them. This is known as nirveda kArikai. Our elders have instituted a practice of reciting this while uttering the verse "shloka trayaM idaM puNyam". This can be found in the ahnika grantham of Svami Sri Tirukkutantai Deshikan. The import of these three verses is that the Lord should come to our rescue in the manner of His gracing Gajendra. Further, we should be blessed with the suitability to render kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana. Finally, this day should not be wasted. Instead, it should be put to use in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam for which we seek Lord Narayana's grace. During such an instance, we should not incur the wrath of Lord Narayana and approach Him with the request for forgiveness of the transgression. Thus, the statement of Daya Devi is intended to denote that one must seek kaimkaryam which does not incur any

apacharams and does not in any way preclude the performance of Prayaschitta Prapatti. The tribute “sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH” denotes the fact that Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan “Given this state of Mine what do you recommend needs to be done?” The tribute “tadvIkShaNaiH spR^isha daye tava keLipadmaiH” is Svami Desikan’s response. This denotes the fact that Lord Srinivasa’s eye-glances are at the command of Daya Devi. This is visualized as a lotus, which is held like a toy in Daya Devi’s hand to attract those dear to Her (sharaNAgatAs) and soothe them with the touch of this lotus. The act of creation of the universe is a sport engaged in by Lord Srinivasa. However, this is engaged in only at the command of Daya Devi. The inner meaning of this tribute is that Svami Desikan desires the soothing touch of the lotus denoted by the Kataksham of Lord Srinivasa, which is subject to the command of Daya Devi. The lotus is itself held as a toy in the hand of Daya Devi.



tadvIkShaNaiH spR^isha daye tava keLipadmaiH

In verse 25 of the DevanAyaka PancAshat Svami Desikan describes the compassionate eye-glances of Lord DevanAyaka through the tribute “vishvAbhirakShaNa vihArakR^itakShaNaiste vaimAnikAdhipa viDambita

mugdhapadmaiH amodavAhibhiranAmaya vAkya garbhaIH ardrIbhavAmyamR^itavarShanibhairapA~NgaiH" (Lord DevanAyaka is engaged in the sport of protecting the universe. His intent is that no being in the universe should suffer. For this purpose, He need not move mountains. Instead, His compassionate eye-glances falling upon these beings would suffice. The eye-glances are like a lotus. It is replete with coolness, softness and a pleasing fragrance. The fragrance of the Lord's eye-glances is different from that of an ordinary flower. It confers the benefit of Bhagavad kaimkaryam in the aprAkR^ita (bereft of prakR^iti sambandham and replete with shuddha satvam) desham of Sri Vaikuntam. It destroys our sins. Not only that, the eye-glances of Devanayaka seem to enquire about the well-being of the Bhakta. Svami Desikan declares here that he is drenched in the nectarine shower of the eye-glances of Devanayaka as a result.) Similarly, Tirukacchi Nambi seeks to be drenched by the compassionate eye-glances of Lord VaradarAja in the DevarAja AShTakam tribute "tvadIkShaNa sudhAsindhuvIcivikShepashIkaraiH kAruNyamArutAnItaiH shItalairabhiShi~nca mAm". Another important meaning to be gained from this Daya Satakam verse is from the tribute "gharmopatapta iva shItaLAtAmudanvAn". The usage upa denotes in close proximity. In this instance that which is in close proximity to the ocean is the sand on the ocean bank. In this context, the heat from the sand is transferred to the surface waters of the ocean. However, the inherent nature of the ocean water is one of coolness. In a like manner, even if Lord Srinivasa is greatly angered by our transgression, it is only temporary. Due to His association with Daya Devi, this anger results in a light punishment. Thus, it does not take away from His essential nature of utmost compassion for all beings. The second point of note is that surrender performed at the feet of Lord Srinivasa is equivalent to performing sharaNAgati to those extremely dear to Him-in this case AcAryAs. Thus, a surrender undertaken at the feet of AcAryAs is joyfully accepted by Lord Srinivasa as a surrender to Him. Daya Devi's delight knows no bounds when She heard the tribute of Svami Desikan from this verse. This is due to the fact that Svami Desikan has highlighted numerous intricate messages from the shAstras in the process of glorifying Her. Her delight is in the manner of parents enjoying the words of their child. She then remarks to Svami Desikan "No doubt your statements here are entirely in accordance with the shAstras. I am never separated from Lord Srinivasa even for a moment. A sharaNAgati performed to Me is equivalent to sharaNAgati performed at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. However, after performing sharaNAgati to Me and then submitting the request for PrAyaschitta Prapatti, again and again you indulge in uttaratra (post-prapatti transgressions) and seek the destruction of



sA mAmaruntudabharanyasanAnuvR^ittiH

pApArambaka pApam (those sins that prompt one to engage in additional sinful acts). Having done all of this, if you indulge in material pleasures, what comes out of My abhaya pradAnam (freedom from fear for you)? You need to ensure that this does not come about.” Svami Desikan reflects long and hard about this instruction from Daya Devi. She is absolutely right in that once Her protection is assured one must be engaged in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam to the exclusion of everything else. Svami Desikan’s reply becomes evident in the next verse.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“Svami Desikan presents a picturesque portrayal here. A preliminary presumption of a possible self-negation by Daya Devi is conveyed. By way of a pre-emptive strike, Svami Desikan conceives a sambhAShaNam (constructive dialog) between Daya Devi and himself, wherein Daya Devi remarks “You want everything and address Me with great reverence. However, I am a mere abstract quality conveniently invested with a sentience and assigned the designation Daya Devi. Therefore, please address your tribute and request to Lord Srinivasa in whom I have sought refuge.” This is quite late in the day since Daya Devi has enjoyed 97 verses in Her praise and elects to protest now. Thanks to Her self-avowal we have a most beautiful poem glorifying Her role and persuasive command on Lord Srinivasa. Svami Desikan’s response is briefly summarized. “Lord Srinivasa is like a vast ocean that retains its coolness at the bottom even in the face of the worst summer heat. Even in moments of wrath with respect to any transgressions, He has deep-rooted Daya. Without You He cannot function. You are an essential constituent to His Lordship. The pramANam referenced here is “shraddhayA devaH devatvam aShnute”. I know Your feelings. You are grievously pained by anyone taking Prapatti lightly and repeating it - as if it were to follow every grievous sin, carefully, and deliberately designed and executed. You are completely justified. However, You are a discerning judge of human weakness. You must do me a favor. You must devise a scheme to touch me with the glances of the Lord’s eyes, which are but toy flowers that You sport in Your hand. If His eye-glances, which are the lovely lotuses in Your hands, touch me due to Your initiative, I become relieved. I enjoy Srinivasa Daya in full.”



Slokam 99

दृष्टेऽपि दुर्बलधियं दमनेऽपि दृप्तं

स्नात्वाऽपि धूळिरसिकं भजनेऽपि भीमम्।

बद्ध्वा गृहाण वृषशैल पतेर्दये मां

त्वद्वारणं स्वयमनुग्रह श‍ृङ्खलाभिः ॥९९॥

dR^iShTe(a)pi durbala dhiyaM damane(a)pi dR^iptaM

snAtvA(a)pi dhUlirasikaM bhajane(a)pi bhImam|

baddhvA gR^ihANa vR^iShashaila paterdaye mAM

tvadvAraNaM svayam anugraha shR^i~NgalAbhiH||99



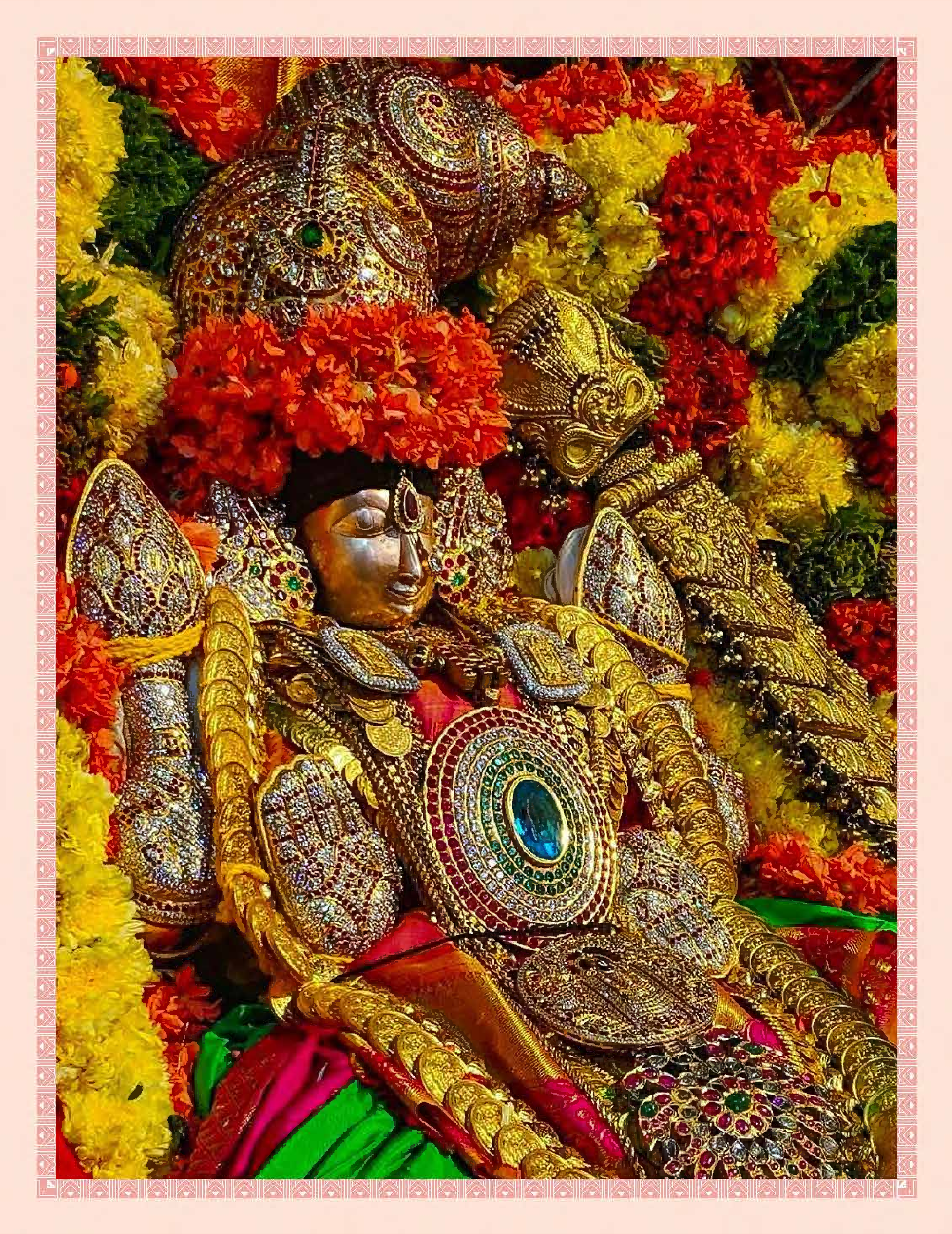
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"This verse is "dR^iShTe(a)pi durbala dhiyaM damane(a)pi dR^iptaM snAtvA(a)pi dhUlirasikaM bhajane(a)pi bhImam baddhvA gR^ihANa vR^iShashaila paterdaye mAM tvadvAraNaM svayam anugraha shR^i~NgalAbhiH." Svami Desikan describes himself as an elephant on a rampage. The elephant has a close associate - the mahout or controller. In this instance Svami Desikan conceives himself to be the elephant belonging to the mahout, Daya Devi. Thus, it becomes Her duty to protect this elephant. The sambodhanam in this verse is "vR^iShashailapateH daye!" (Oh Daya Devi of Lord Srinivasa). The tribute "dR^iShTe(a)pi durbala dhiyaM" denotes the fact that the elephant on a rampage has lost all sense of discernment. Thus, the elephant is unable to recognize what is good and what is bad. Without discrimination of any kind, the elephant is on a mission of destruction. Even food offering, which is good for the elephant, is disregarded in this case due to its state. The salutation "damane(a)pi dR^iptaM" denotes the whip wielded by the mahout to control the elephant. Despite repeated whiplashes from the mahout, the elephant is in no mood to yield. The tribute "snAtvA(a)pi dhUlirasikaM" refers to the fact that despite being bathed by the mahout to cleanse the beast, upon reaching the bank, the elephant rolls in dirt due to its rampaging state. Thus, even though the elephant has been given a cleansing bath, in an instant it becomes dirty again. The only recourse, therefore, is to chain the beast with strong cuffs from which the elephant cannot break free and tie it up.

Svami Desikan describes his state in terms of this analogy. It must also be noted that Svami Desikan describes himself as the elephant belonging to Daya Devi. It must be noted that Svami Desikan being blemishless himself takes on the role of a commoner to highlight our plight. What is our plight? We have been bestowed with the shastras in order to lead our lives in the proper manner. The shastras provide specific instructions on how to lead our lives. It exhorts us to always speak the truth, never to miss performance of Sandhyavandanam, and not to incur BhAgavata apacharam. However, the term "dR^iShTe(a)pi" denotes that despite having the shastras in front of us, we exhibit a total disregard for them and lead our lives in manner that is completely opposed to the shastras. This is captured by the usage "api". Thus, the term "dR^iShTe(a)pi" highlights behavior that is completely opposite to what is recommended by the shastras. The shastraic messages have been reinforced by our elders who go to great lengths to explain their import to us. Having heard this exposition, the first act engaged in is that of BhAgavata apacharam.

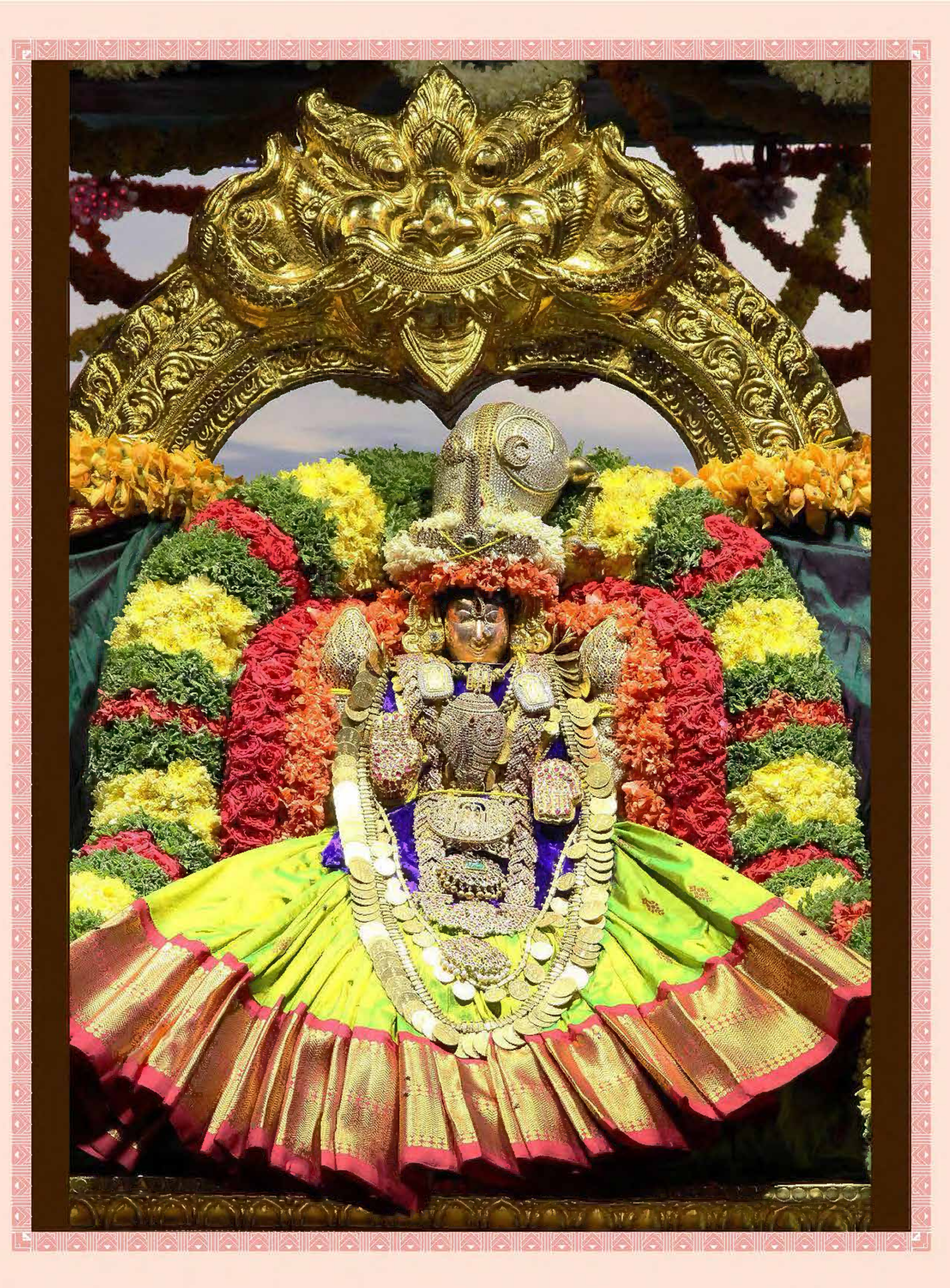
For example, if one is awaiting the purohita for performance of a religious rite and the latter is late in coming, immediately the former remarks "These Vaidikas do not have consistency in their behavior. They promise to come at a certain time but always arrive an hour later. How is it possible for me to perform the religious rite and then go to work?". In this process, one does not take into account an unexpected circumstance or a traffic jam that has delayed the Vaidika. Thus, the maximum abuse is heaped upon the Vaidika. Even when the purohita explains the circumstances that caused the delay one continues the tirade with the statement "Is it only you that has commitments and special circumstances? What about my needs to be in the office at a certain time?".

However, the first instruction we receive from our Acharyas is that BhAgavata apacharams of this kind should be avoided. However, despite this advice, we seem to be steeped in BhAgavata apacharam every moment of our lives. This is true even of Vaidikas and not restricted to mere common folk. Despite the instruction from the shastram to avoid BhAgavata apacharam and the message being reinforced by advice from Acharyas, one's intellect (buddhi) is clouded due to a cluttered mind. Just as the rampaging elephant discards the food offering, we too discard the instruction from the shastras and advice of Acharyas, even though they are intended for our well-being. The import is that even though the food offered is good for the elephant it is discarded. In a like manner, we too exhibit a total disregard for the shastraic instruction, which is intended to ensure our welfare.



The shastras further instruct us through the messages "mAtR^i devo bhava pitR^i devo bhava AcArya devo bhava atithi devo bhava" How many guests have we entertained? Our elders have routinely engaged in this practice of feeding a guest or two on a daily basis prior to partaking of food. They have ensured that a child or two from a poor family is afforded the opportunity for education and have been raised as part of their family. We must appreciate that these acts of generosity on the part of our elders have kept us in our current state. Thus, only if we undertake acts of charity and kindness can we ensure the well-being of our progeny. Adiyen is heartbroken at the inability to engage in these good acts. Instead of expressing regret for our inability to engage in this type of generosity, we are constantly engaged in BhAgavata apacharam. We do not heed good advice which is intended for our well-being. Instead, we act in a manner that is totally opposed to the shastras. The tribute "dR^iShTe(a)pi durbala dhiyaM damane(a)pi dR^iptaM" denotes the fact that despite punishment being meted out for these acts of BhAgavata apacharam, one remains blissfully ignorant of the fact that these are consequences for sins we have committed. Instead, we seem to engage in additional sinful acts. Despite punishment being meted out the tendency to engage in sinful acts remains unmitigated. There is no resolve to refrain from Bhagavad apacharam, BhAgavata apacharam, and nAnavida apacharam.

Despite all the above flaws, due to some sukrutam (good deed engaged in unknowingly), the grace of Daya Devi ensures that we beget Acharya sambandham (contact). As a consequence, SaraNAgati is performed. This act is akin to bathing the rampaging elephant. It may be remembered that the act of SaraNAgati destroys our sins and renders us pure. This is the analogy to bathing the elephant. The dirt in this context refers to our sins. The inner meaning is that performance of SaraNAgati destroys all our sins (sanchita and prArabdha with the exception of apyupagata prArabdha karma - that is the karma that prevails until the end of one's life after performance of SaraNAgati.) After having been cleansed by a bath, the elephant can very well remain clean. However, upon reaching the bank the elephant rolls in dirt thus rendering itself unclean once again. In the context of SaraNAgatas the recommended code of conduct is to engage in Bhagavad and BhAgavata kaimkaryam upon performance fo SaraNAgati. This needs to be the singular goal. Namely, to the maximum extent possible from our earnings, we must put it to use for Kaimkaryam for Bhagavan, BhAgavatas, and Acharyas. Instead, we tend to think of how our earnings can enhance our own comfort and indulgence. This is akin to the elephant taking to dirt upon reaching the bank after the bath.



Thus, despite being rid of our sins due to the grace of Acharyas through SaraNAgati, we still engage in satisfaction of base pleasures and desires. This is completely contrary to the prescribed code of conduct for Prapannas. The tribute "bhajane(a)pi bhImam" describes the fact that the mahout arrives to help the elephant. However, the rampaging elephant exhibits anger towards the mahout. Likewise, with regards to us, it is the exhibition of anger towards BhAgavatas, who come to help us, exhibiting anger towards Daya Devi, who is only interested in our well-being, and exhibiting anger towards Lord Srinivasa. This is known as "aj~nAdhi langanam". The tribute "baddhvA gR^ihANa vR^iShashailapaterdaye mAM tvad vAraNaM svayam anugraha shR^i~NgalAbhiH" denotes Svami Desikan's request to Daya Devi to render him shackled in the manner of the elephant being tied by strong chains from which it cannot break free. In this case, the chain that Svami Desikan refers to is the anugraham (grace) of Daya Devi. The inner meaning is that Daya Devi's grace is overpowering in that once SaraNAgati at Her feet is performed, the individual ceases to engage in anything distracting from Bhagavad-BhAgavata-Acharya Kaimkaryam and does not give in to base desires or pleasures. This is denoted by the restraining chain of the anugraham of Daya Devi. The binding of the elephant needs to be examined further. In this instance the elephant belongs to Daya Devi due to performance of SaraNAgati at Her feet. As a consequence, this elephant gains the status of a crown prince. Specifically, Bharanyasam is the crowning ceremony for the kaimkarya samrajyam that awaits the prapanna at the end of their earthly existence. In this instance, if the elephant goes on a rampage it becomes the responsibility of the owner of the elephant to apply the restraining chain. Thus, Svami Desikan seeks the grace of Daya Devi to ensure blemishless post-prapatti conduct. Therefore, even though our conduct may be similar to that of the rampaging elephant, the restraining shackles of Daya Devi's grace will ensure that we are not distracted from our pursuit of Bhagavad-BhAgavata-Acharya Kaimkaryam and do not give into distractions of any kind. With this we conclude our exposition of this Daya Satakam verse."

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

"Oh Daya Devi adorning Lord Srinivasa! I behave like a mad elephant. On first sight, I am weak in intellect and burdened with an inability to discriminate between good and bad. Therefore, I am extremely unreliable. If one were to tame this elephant and control it, its ichorous nature would resist the attempt. If bathed in water, it would only roll on dirty earth. It relishes dirt and unclean things. If approached and cajoled by the master (mahout or good people), it would revolt in a threatening manner. I have described myself thus far. This elephant belongs to

You, Oh Mother Daya Devi! This elephant should not be allowed to languish in this manner. It is risky and quite dangerous for the elephant. Therefore, please lock it with strong shackles. In this case, it is the shackles of Your anugraham. You must do this Yourself by clandestinely approaching me from behind and fasten me with strong shackles. This alone will ensure the well-being of this elephant as well as all others in the universe. A few important points need to be observed here.

1. Enjoy the beauty of the simile.

2. Due to the unique relationship between Daya Devi and the dependent Prapanna, She has to Herself keep the prapanna under control. This is captured by the usage “svayam”. Due to the unique one-to-one relationship between the surrendered Prapanna and Daya Devi, She needs to shackle “Her elephant”. Daya Devi has to do it of Her own volition.

Certain commentators appear to interpret this as implied nirhetuka kR^ipa. Not necessarily. Daya has to protect Her protégé - myself and has to do it Herself. This prayer moves Her. Hence it becomes sahetuka too!”



Slokam 100

नातः परं किमपि मे त्वयि नाथनीयं

मातर्दये मयि कुरुष्व तथा प्रसादम्।

बद्धादरो वृषगिरि प्रणयी यथाऽसौ

मुक्तानुभूतिमिह दास्यति मे मुकुन्दः॥ १०० ॥

nAtaH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM

mAtar daye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam|

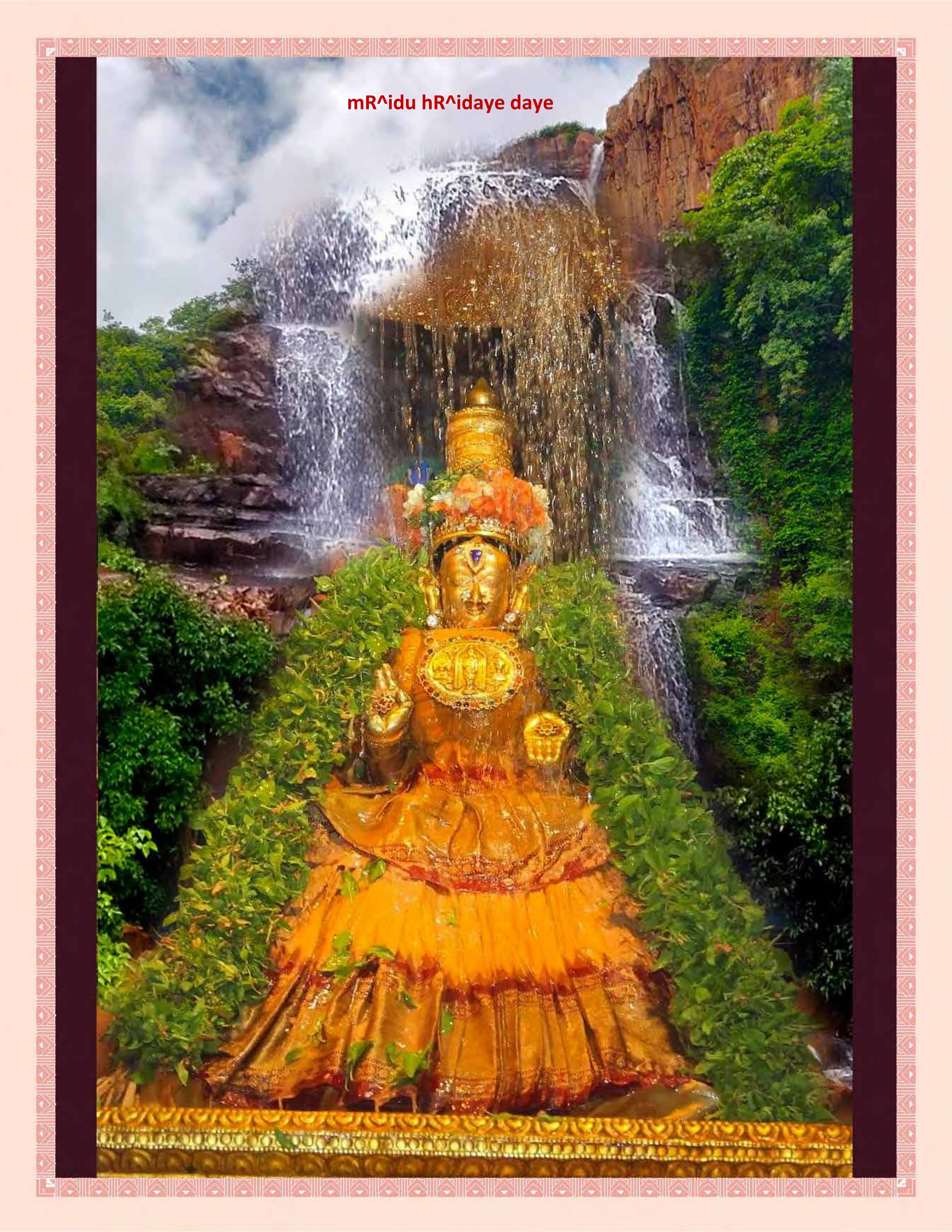
baddhAdaro vR^iShagiri praNayI yathA(a)sau

muktAnu bhUtim iha dAsyati me mukundaH||100



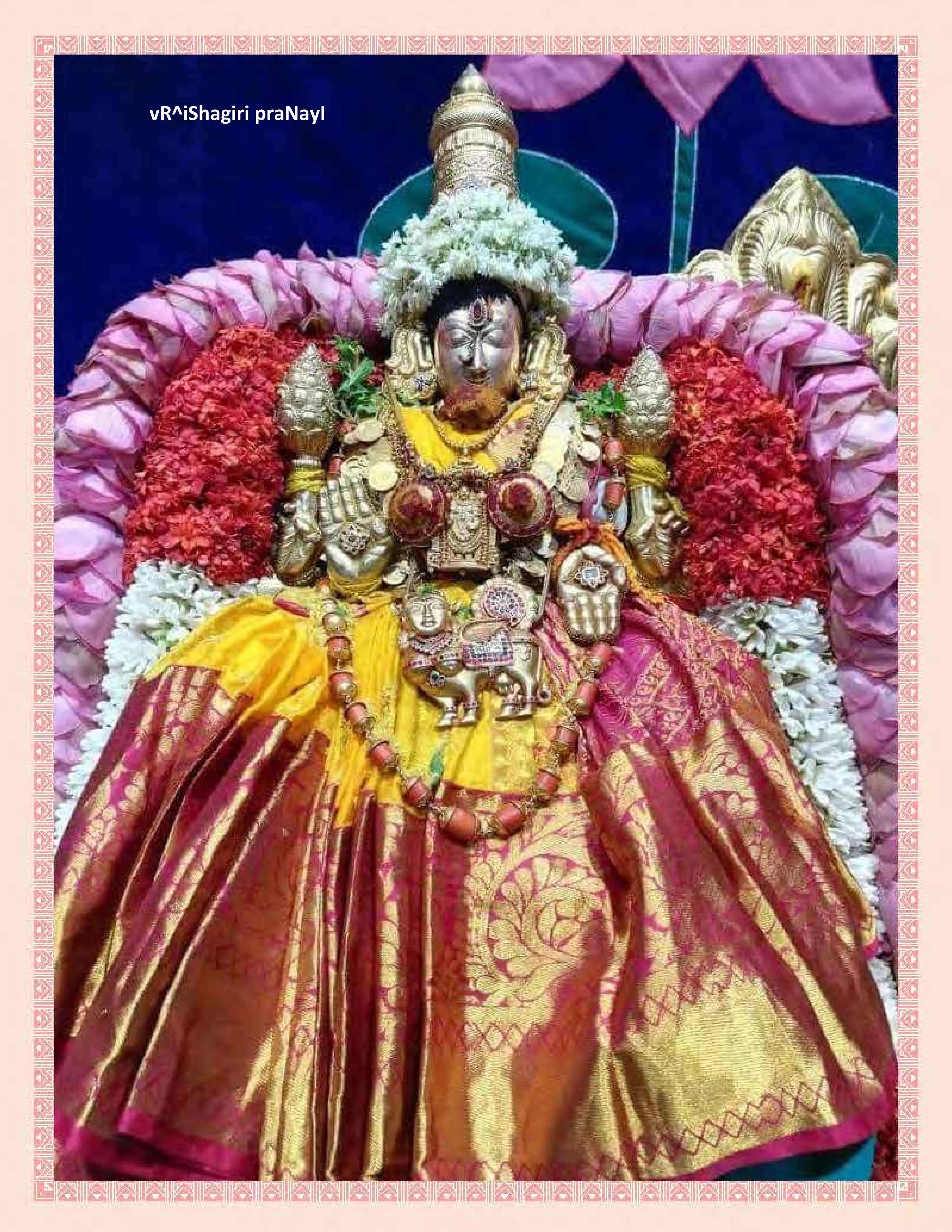
We first quote the anubhavam of Sri U.Ve. Valayapettai Ramachar Svamin:

"We now come to verse 100, which is the final verse formally glorifying Daya Devi in this Stotram. The remaining verses document the glory of the Daya Satakam as a phalashruti - namely the benefits gained by reciting this majestic stuti. This being the grand finale, Svami Desikan renders a magnificent verse (not to say that the other verses are any less) to conclude his tribute to Daya Devi with a flourish. This is literally an outpouring caused by an overwhelming of his mind and heart by Daya Devi. This verse is "nAtaH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM mAtar daye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam baddhAdaro vR^iShagiri praNayI yathA(a)sau muktAnu bhUtim iha dAsyati me mukundaH". We need to recognize that when one undertakes a gargantuan task, one starts with great enthusiasm. Towards the middle unexpected difficulties may be encountered giving rise to a feeling of exhaustion. As one reaches the end, there is a tinge of sadness that the task will be over. This is a feeling that adiyen experiences every year while rendering the Tiruppavai upanyasams in MArgazhi mAsam. At the start, it commences with great enthusiasm. After a week or ten days, the feeling of only completing a portion of this wonderful work of Andal sets in. In fact, adiyen even experiences a fear whether the task can be completed. After the 26th Pasuram, the feeling of sadness nearing completion of the task begins to weigh in. This is true of the 10-day Brahmotsavam for Lord Srinivasa. It starts in a grand manner with great enthusiasm. Progressively, the strain from the effort begins to show typically on


mR^idu hR^idaye daye

days 4-7. Then as the utsavam nears conclusion, the realization sets in that the utsavam will be over shortly and that one cannot enjoy this for another year. Likewise, when it comes to the Daya Satakam, it dawns upon us that Svami Desikan is about to complete this magnificent Stotram. Could he not extend this some more? The reason for this is the unparalleled anubhavam of Svami Desikan. In the previous verse, Svami Desikan described himself as an elephant on a rampage. This elephant pays no heed to what is good and what is intended for its well-being. It lacks the ability to discriminate between good and bad. Either when threatened with punishment or when approached in a kind manner, the elephant pays no heed. Therefore, Svami Desikan implores Daya Devi that the elephant be shackled by the unbreakable chain of Daya Devi's anugraham. Elsewhere, he has described himself as a being that can never be restrained and seeks to be captured in the net known as Daya Devi without any escape route. In reality, Svami Desikan is mirroring the plight of individuals like us, who are caught up in prakR^iti. The inner meaning of these tributes is that we are replete with tamo guNam (evil tendencies). This causes a suppression of satva guNam (good tendencies). Even for one that is predominantly filled with tamo guNam, the grace of Daya Devi is necessary. We may also recall that through the verse "mR^idu hR^idaye daye.." Svami Desikan performed sharaNAgati to Daya Devi. Through the tribute "vij~nAta shAsana gatiH.." Svami Desikan also highlighted the importance and role of prAyashcitta prapatti. Then in the verse "santanyamAnamaparAdha gaNaM vicintya…." Svami Desikan submitted a prayer to Daya Devi for destruction of papArambaka pApam (sins that cause one to engage in additional sins). In this manner, Svami Desikan has sought refuge at the feet of Daya Devi and documented that he has no other recourse besides Daya Devi. Daya Devi enjoyed the tributes of Svami Desikan one by one. One such tribute that stands out is "aki~ncana nidhiM sUtiM apavarga trivargayoH a~njanAdrIshvaradayAm abhiShtaumi nira~njanAm". It may also be recalled that Svami Desikan invited prominent guests such as Lord Srinivasa, Mahalakshmi Thayar, Bhumi Devi, Neela Devi, Vishvaksena, Svami NammAzhvar, and Maharishis to the sabha at Tiruvenkatam, where he delivers his magnificent stuti to Daya Devi. The import of the above tribute delivered in the presence of great personages is that Daya Devi is the sole recourse for those who are incapable of adopting the means of j~nAna yogam, karma yogam, and bhakti yogam due to lack of knowledge and strength. They are literally destitute without Daya Devi. Not only that, Daya Devi stands ready to grace those who are well-versed in the shastras, who have Atma j~nAnam. She is willing to grant wealth (aishvaryam), residence in Svargam (AmuShmikam), and kaivalyam to Her seekers. Additionally,

even for those who may not have Atma j~nAnam, and desire only material benefits, Daya Devi grants them their wishes and in a step-by-step manner causes them to seek mokSham. This reflects Her glorification as "a~njanAdrIshvara dayA". ā~njanam denotes collyrium. This is usually a beauty aid for the eyes. However, the a~njanam of Daya Devi reveals svarUpa j~nanam (knowledge of our essential nature - one of subservience to Lord Narayana) and causes us to seek refuge at the feet of Lord Srinivasa. Svami Desikan swears before this elite audience that he will glorify Daya Devi to the exclusion of everything else. Svami Desikan commenced his tribute to Daya Devi from verse 11 of the stuti and continued on. In the verse "vR^iShagirigR^ihamedhiguNAH bodha bala ishvarya vIrya shakti mukhAH doShAbhaveyurete yadi nAma daye tvayA vinA bhUtAH" Svami Desikan even declares that in the absence of Daya Devi, the other kalyANa guNams verily become flaws (doSha). The import of this verse is that for the Lord's kalyaNa guNams to acquire their rightful status, the association with Daya Devi is mandatory. The usage "bhaveyuH" in this context refers to making the unrealizable remain as is. In this instance it is a guarantee that Daya Devi is forever associated with the guNams of the Lord and thus, they do not become doShams. Furthermore, Daya Devi is the cause for Lord Srinivasa undertaking the activities of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. She comes to the rescue of the Lord in His times of distress as captured in the verse "karuNe duriteShu mAmakeShu pratikArAntara durjayeShu khinnaH" (Our sins are so great that they overwhelm Lord Srinivasa Himself. At this juncture, He adorns Himself with the protective armour of Daya Devi. Instantly this destroys the sins and renders Tiruvenkatam as the place of victory for Lord Srinivasa (vijaya sthAnam). This is the great upakaram of Daya Devi to Lord Srinivasa.) The major impediment to attaining moksham and engaging in Bhagavad Kaimkaryam is our mountainous sin-pile, which cannot be destroyed by ordinary means. However, when one seeks refuge in Daya Devi, She ensures the destruction of the sin-pile and renders the supplicant fit for moksham. Svami Desikan glorifies Daya Devi in several ways. For example, in the salutation "divyApA~Ngam dishasi karuNe eShu sat deshikAtmA kShipraM prAptA vR^IShagiripatiME kShatrabandhvAdayaste vishvAcAryA vidhi shivamukhAH svAdhikAroparuddhAH manye mAtA jaDa iva sute vatsalA mAdR^Ishe tvam". Svami Desikan declares that Daya Devi enters the compassionate eye-glances of Acharyas. Once an individual becomes the recipient of these eye-glances, he is assured of moksham - something that has not been possible even for Brahma and Rudra to attain. This comes about due to Daya Devi's overbearing concern for the Prapanna in the manner of a mother caring for her retarded son. Verse 60 documents Svami


vR^iShagiri praNayI

Desikan's formal surrender to Daya Devi through the tribute "mR^idu hR^idaye daye mR^iditakAmahite mahite..". When the Lord Himself fails to see even a single good act on the part of a supplicant and beholds only their sins, Daya Devi comes to their rescue by highlighting the good acts undertaken by the supplicant. This is captured in the tribute "hitamitijagat dR^iShtyA kluptaIH aklupta phalAntaraiH". The verse "bharanyAsacChanna prabala vR^ijina prAbhR^ita bhR^itAM" documents the role of Daya Devi in receiving and destroying the sins which are submitted by way of offering with the cloth cover of Bharanyasam. She does not stop there. She causes Lord Srinivasa to undertake numerous avatarams, Archa and Vibhava including His ten principal avatarams. In keeping with the declaration "kalau venkaTanAyakaH" Lord Srinivasa rids us of the scorching heat generated by the era of kali and graces us. To Daya Devi of such magnificence, Svami Desikan in the tenth decad describes his pitiable state and in each verse of this decad submits a prayer seeking Her grace for his rescue. He specifically requests Daya Devi for fructification of prAyashcitta prapatti, as well as the destruction of pAparambaka pApam and finally, for singular focus on Bhagavad-BhAgavata kaimkaryam without giving into distractions coming about from gratification of the senses. In fact, Svami Desikan declares that it is Daya Devi's responsibility to protect him. Daya Devi is extremely delighted by this rendition of Svami Desikan. Daya Devi reasons to Herself that numerous mahans including Azhvars, Maharishis, and Acharyas have rendered stotrams in praise of Lord Narayana. However, none of them has glorified His Daya separately. On the other hand, Svami Desikan has delivered a most beautiful and elaborate glorification of Daya Devi to the exclusion of all else. Therefore, She needs to grant him something as a reward for his magnificent stuti. She addresses Svami Desikan through the words "Oh Svami! You have rendered a most exquisite Storam exclusively in praise of Me. Therefore, I desire to give you something. What is it that you desire?" Here it must be noted that Daya Devi's offer appears to be pratyupakAram for upakAram from Svami Desikan. If this is the spirit of the offering is pratyupakAram, it becomes a transactional dealing. On the other hand, the anugraham has to be something of a more lasting nature. This is illustrated through an instance from SrImad RAmAyaNam. After Ravana abducted SItA Devi, Lord Rama in course of time befriended Sugriva and subsequently Hanuman was sent to the southern direction in search of SItA. Having seen SItA Devi, Hanuman returned to Lord Rama's presence and conveyed the good news through the tribute "dR^iShTA SItA". Lord Rama thinks of a way to suitably reward Hanuman for bringing the good news of sighting SItA Devi. He reasons that nothing can adequately reward Hanuman for


ataH paraM kimapi me tvayi
nAthanIyaM

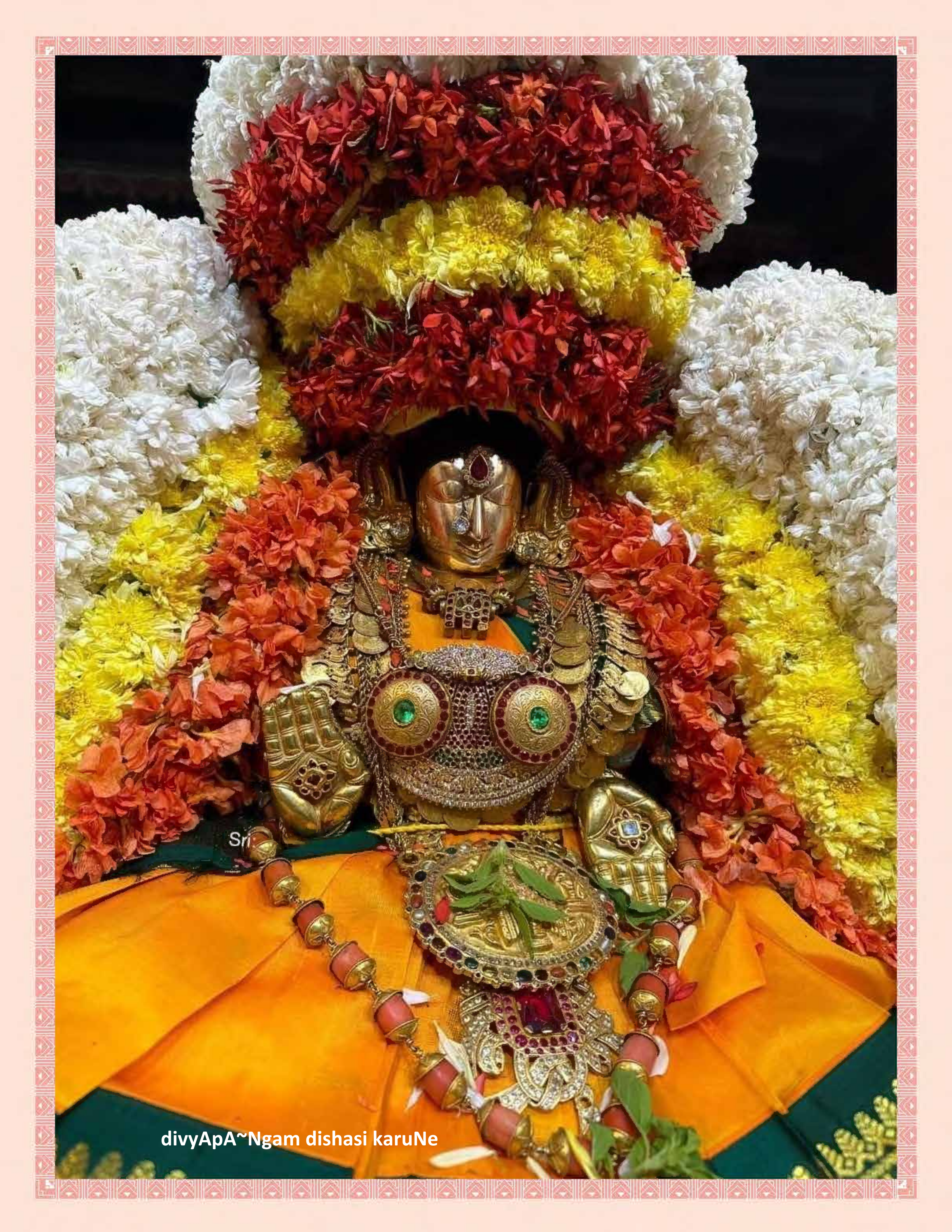
the yeoman efforts and for bringing the good news. Therefore, He reasons that "eSha sarvasya bhUtastu pariShva~Nga hanumataH" to reflect the fact that no matter what He does it would not amount to anything significant compared to the monumental help rendered by Hanuman. Lord Rama decides to embrace Hanuman with His body that has been carefully tended to by SItA Devi as a gesture of giving His entire possession to Hanuman in gratitude. This is reflected in the salutation "eSha sarvasya bhUto". Saying thus, Lord Rama affectionately embraced Hanuman. This is equivalent to giving His all to Hanuman. This gesture on the part of Lord Rama was intended to highlight the mahopakAram of Hanuman in locating SItA Devi and bringing back the good news of Her sighting. It must also be remembered that the embrace of Hanuman was unique in that nobody else in the RAmAyaNam received this. In a like manner, Daya Devi desires to highlight the magnam opus of Svami Desikan in rendering this majestic Stotram in Her praise and highlight this magnificent work to the universe. Accordingly, She resolves to find out what is it that Svami Desikan intensely desires so that She may grant his wish and bring him great delight. It must also be borne in mind that just as Lord Rama was not satisfied with the embrace of Hanuman (even though this gave His all), due to the fact that Lord Rama felt that no gift on His part can adequately reward Hanuman for his extraordinary act. Daya Devi too in this instance feels that even if She grants Svami Desikan everything he desires, it is not a sufficient reward for his extraordinary task of glorifying Her. This illustrates the state of Svami NammAzhvAr during a particular instance. Svami NammAzhvAr performed his formal sharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Srinivasa in the famous Tiruvaimozhi Pasuram 6.10 "pukazh onRillA aDiyEn un aDikkIzh amarntu pukuntEnE". (Without recourse to anything else, I seek refuge in Your feet). The inner meaning is that the Azhvar upon performing sharaNAgati at the feet of Lord Srinivasa has no desire for aihika benefits (material wealth and gratification of the senses). Instead, all he desires is the Kaimkarya sAmrAjyam in Srivaikuntam. In fact, even Moksham becomes a by-product of this desire for uninterrupted Kaimkaryam! Lord Srinivasa reasons that the Azhvar has delivered 600 Pasurams so far and desires to hear the remaining 400 Pasurams from the Azhvar himself. This would not be possible if the Azhvar's request for Moksham is granted right away. The intent of Lord Srinivasa is to enjoy the Azhvar's Bhagavad anubhavam in the remaining 400 verses rather than any barriers that preclude moksham for the Azhvar, who demonstrated blemishless conduct. The Azhvar is quite surprised that his request for Moksham was not granted immediately. He began to lament this fact in the seventh decad of the Tiuvaimozhi. Specifically, in the Pasuram "uNNilAviya aivarAl kumatIRRi ennai un pAta pa~Nkayam naNNilA


muktAnubhUtim iha dAsyati

vakaiyE nalivAn innum eNNukinRAi eNNilA perumAyanE imaiyOrkaL Ettum ulaka mUnRuDai aNNalE amutE appanE ennai ALvAnE" (Emperor of the three worlds! You are most enjoyable although there is no such requirement. You rule over me too! Even though I have submitted my sharaNAgati to You, I have still not received Your grace completely. Instead, You have left me at the mercy of my five senses, which are dragging me towards pursuits that are in direct opposition with Your commands. What is it that You have in mind for me? What is the reason for making me a prisoner of these senses? What is the use of my surrender to You in that case? I do not know the reason for this. You as the all-knowing one needs to answer this. You have verily subjected me to that which is totally opposed to my sharaNAgati to You. Please desist from this act. You serve as the panacea for all ills arising from the senses. You need to rescue me.) Svami Desikan follows the lead of Svami NammAzhvAr as he delivers verse 100 of the Daya Satakam "na ataH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM mAtardaye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam baddhAdaro vR^iShagiri praNayI yathA(a)sau muktAnubhUtim iha dAsyati me mukundaH". "mAtardaye" (Oh Mother Daya Devi!) is the sambodhanam for Daya Devi in this verse. A related tribute from Svami Desikan's Sri Stuti becomes relevant in this context "mAtA devi tvamasi bhagavAn vAsudevaH pitA me jAtassohaM janani yuvayorekalakShyaM dayAyAH dhatto yuShmatparijanatayA deshikairapyatastvaM kim te bhUyaH priyamitikilaH smera vaktrA vibhAsi". This is Svami Desikan's mangalAsAsanam for Mahalakshmi Thayar. She sports a bewitching smile, which seems to suggest "what is it that you desire, Oh Svami?" Svami Desikan's reply is "You are the mother of the entire universe and more importantly, my Mother. Lord Vasudeva is my Father, who nourishes and enriches me. I am privy to the compassionate eye-glances of You both! This cannot be attained easily and this is sought after by many. Every Srivaishnava considers his life as being fulfilled only upon begetting Bhagavad Kaimkaryam. Due to the grace of my Acharya, I have gotten the status of one who is engaged in Kaimkaryam to You both". "Is there anything more than this that you desire, Oh Svami?" is the intent of Thayar's smile. In a like manner, in this Daya Satakam verse, Daya Devi enquires of Svami Desikan "Oh Svami! What is it that you desire?" Svami Desikan's reply is captured in this verse. Commencing with "na ataH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM mAtardaye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam" Svami Desikan states that he desires nothing else after becoming a receptacle of Daya Devi's grace. It is instructive to observe that Svami Desikan commences the tribute with the usage "na" (negation). Usually, the reply is in the form "mama na" denoting that "I do not desire anything more". However, by way of answering Daya Devi, Svami Desikan commences the tribute

with "na". Svami Desikan continues "I submit a humble request to You. It is sufficient if You can grant me this request due to Your grace". Daya Devi enquires "What is it that you submit a request for?". Svami Desikan replies "Due to my sharaNAgati to You, oh Mother Daya Devi, I am assured of Moksham. I have no desire for aihika benefits (material wealth and pleasures for gratifying the senses) and have never sought them. I have also undertaken the performance of prAyashcitta prapatti and additionally for the destruction of pApArambaka pApam at Your feet. Thus, I am assured of engaging in the pleasant task of Bhagavad-BhAgavata Kaimkaryam and have shut off all ways of incurring the wrath of Lord Srinivasa. Therefore, You may wonder what more do I need?" In this context it is helpful to recall Svami Desikan's Srimad Rahasyatrayasaram exposition of the last moments of Svami Bhashyakarar. During his last moments, Svami Bhashyakarar was surrounded by his disciples, who were in tears as they contemplated the future of the Bhagavad Ramanuja Darsanam after Svami Bhashyakarar departs for TirunADu (SrI VaikuNTham). They resolve that along with Svami Bhashyakarar's end, they would end their lives too by self-immolation. When Svami Bhashyakarar heard this, he was quite shocked and exclaimed "If anyone here is contemplating suicide upon my departure from this world, I swear in the haloed name of Lord Narayana and Svami Alavandar that this individual does not belong to me." There can be no greater punishment than this. The next question that arises is what is left then for the followers of Svami Bhashyakarar to engage in upon his demise. Svami Bhashyakarar outlines this in the form of five commands (divya aj~nA). First among them is the instruction to master the Sri Bhashyam and propagate it through the traditional Kalakshepam mode. Next, comes the instruction to enjoy the aruLicheyal of the Azhvars in the Divya Prabandham. If this is not possible, Svami Bhashyakarar recommends undertaking Bhagavad Kaimkaryam at a Divya Desam in terms of flower offerings to the Lord or stringing together garlands from flowers and the like. If this is not possible, the recommendation is to engage in constant recitation of the dvaya mantram. If this too is not possible, Svami Bhashyakarar suggests engaging in the service of a Srivaishnava, who undertakes the observance of the above four instructions. Since all the sishyas of Svami Bhashyakarar are sharaNAgatas, they need not worry about moksham, which is guaranteed as a consequence of sharaNAgati. If one has second thoughts on this subject, it merely indicates their lack of mahAvishvAsam. What then happens to the issue of "deha yAtra" during the interim period between performance of sharaNAgati and the end of one's life? Should one worry about this? Svami Bhashyakarar declares that "deha yAtra" is "karmAdhInam" (subject to one's karma). Thus, no matter how much one

agonizes about this issue, it is pointless since Karma dictates the course of happenings. In keeping with this message from Svami Bhashyakarar, Svami Desikan notes that he need not do anything for his deha yAtra. Since moksham is assured and deha yAtra is dictated by karma, is it fine to remain dis-engaged from everything or pursue things according to one's whim and fancy? Svami Desikan answers this by submitting a prayerful appeal looking at Lord Srinivasa who is by the side of Daya Devi through the salutation "asau mukundaH" The usage "asau" denotes one who is by the side. Mukunda is one who grants moksham. The import of the tribute is that Lord Srinivasa (MukundaH) who is by the side of Daya Devi grants moksham either immediately or in time. However, Svami Desikan makes a special request of Daya Devi that the bliss arising from nitya kaimkaryam in Sri Vaikuntam must be granted to him in this lIlA vibhuthi itself. Lord Srinivasa is capable of granting this anubhavam. Svami Desikan's prayerful appeal to Daya Devi is that She must intercede with Her consort, Lord Srinivasa, on behalf of Svami Desikan and ensure that this request is granted. "bhuvi mukunda vindemahi" is another tribute echoing the same sentiment. In the context of the Daya Satakam verse, this sentiment is captured in the tribute "muktAnu bhUtim iha dAsyati me mukundaH" The import of this tribute is that the complete BrahmAnubhavam, which becomes possible in Sri Vaikuntam upon getting Moksham, should be made available in this lIlA vibhuti itself. In the Tiruvaimozhi, Svami NammAzhvar declares "ozhivil kAlam ellAm uDanAi manni vazhuvilA aDimai ceyya vENDum nAm tezhi kural aruvi tiruvE~nkaDattu ezhil kol cOti entai tantai tantaikkE" reflecting the fact that one must engage in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa, who is in the form of the beacon light on top of the Venkatam hill. Lord Srinivasa shines forth as the beacon light with the radiance known as Daya Devi. It is for Lord Srinivasa of such magnificence that Svami NammAzhvar desires to render kaimkaryam. The Azhvar's tribute "vazhuvilA aDimai" which becomes possible in Sri Vaikuntam is what Svami Desikan desires to enjoy in this lIla vibhuti itself! Thus, Svami Desikan closely follows the lead of Svami NammAzhvar in this context. Sri Tirumankai Azhvar in his Periya Tirumozhi mangalAsasanam for Lord Srinivasa declares "tAyE tantai enRum tAramE kILai makkaL enRum nOyE paTTOzhintEn nunnai kANpatOr AcaiyinAl vEyEy pUm pozhil cUzh viraiyAr tiruvE~nKaTavA nAyEn vantaDaintEn nalki Al ennai koNDaruLE". (Thus far, I was bound to samsaram only worrying about my mother, father, wife, and children. My primary goal was to earn money for their well-being and for ensuring their happiness. This was the goal of my life. Totally lacking svarUpa j~nAnam (knowledge of one's essential nature), this lowly being has arrived in Your presence. It is entirely my fault that I had not sought refuge in You


Sri
divyApA~Ngam dishasi karuNe

all this while. However, I have arrived now. Please grace me with Your protection). The outpouring of Sri Tirumankai Azhvar is also captured in this verse of the Daya Satakam. It must be borne in mind, that Svami Desikan never exhibited a disposition of the form that the Azhvar expresses anguish about. Instead, it is to capture our state that Svami Desikan echoes the Azhvar's sentiment in this Daya Satakam verse. The Azhvar further declares that "until now, I was deluded into believing that all relationships arising due to adiyen's bodily existence were the only things. However, now I have been enlightened that You are everything for me." Tirumankai Azhvar too follows the lead of Svami NammAzhvar in highlighting the Upanishad message "mAtA pitA bhrAtA nivAsa sharaNaM suhR^it gatiH NArAyaNa" (Lord Narayana is the mother, father, brother, indweller, sole refuge, well-wisher and the only recourse). Svami NammAzhvar additionally desires to render Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa, whose glory is described in the Upanishad salutation, at Tiruvenkatam. Svami Desikan too follows the lead of the Azhvar in making his request to which Daya Devi enquires "Will this happen if I make the request on your behalf?" Svami Desikan's reply is contained in the salutation "vR^iShagiri praNayI yathA(a)sau muktAnubhUtim iha dAsyati me mukundaH". The tribute "vR^iShagiri praNayI" denotes the fact that Lord Srinivasa decided to take root at the Venkatam hill in keeping with the puraNam statement "mAyavi paramAnandam tyaktvA vaikuNThamuttamam svAmi puShkaraNitIre ramayA sahamodate". The import of this tribute is that Lord Srinivasa, who is in bliss at His abode of Sri Vaikuntam, which is not lacking in anything, gave up His residence here in favor of the banks of Svami PushkaraNi at the Venkatam hill and exudes delight with his consort, Mahalakshmi. Lord Srinivasa, who grants moksham, is glorified by Svami Desikan as "baddhAdaro iha me muktAnubhUtim dAsyati". This denotes the fact that Lord Srinivasa is overjoyed at the arrival of someone who makes this request and takes great pleasure in granting them their request. Here it must be noted that there are two ways to give something to one who arrives at the door of a great emperor seeking something - it is one thing to grant the seeker's wish with great delight and quite another matter to grant it in a manner that is designed to get rid of them as soon as possible.

Here Svami Desikan alludes to the fact that Lord Srinivasa must grant his request with great delight in the manner of the Upanishad salutation "shraddhaya deyaM ashraddhaya(a)deyaM shriya deyaM hriya deyaM bhiya deyaM saMvida deyaM atha yadi te karmavicikitsa va vrittavicikitsa va syat". "shraddhaya deyaM" denotes the fact that a gift given to someone must be offered with great reverence. "ashraddhaya(a)deyaM" denotes the fact that it should never be offered with


mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam

disrespect. “shriya deyaM” and “hriya deyaM” instruct us that the offering must be made with utmost humility. It must be offered in the spirit that the offering should do good for the recipient. It is in this manner that Svami Desikan desires the anugraham of Lord Srinivasa. Instead of offering food like one does to a beggar, inviting a guest to one’s home, treating them with respect, and serving them delicacies that they like while engaging in a pleasant conversation with them is the recommended manner for offering food. This is the manner of Lord Srinivasa’s disposition as reflected in the salutation “asau mukundaH” In this instance, Svami Desikan has arrived seeking Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. This salutation is a prayerful appeal that he should be welcomed with great pleasure by Lord Srinivasa and encouraged to render Kaimkaryam. This is reflected further in the tribute “muktAnubhUtim iha dAsyati”. Svami Desikan desires the bliss of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam, which becomes available in Srivaikuntam upon getting moksham, in this lIlA vibhuti itself. This is in the manner of ToNDaraDipoDi Azhvar’s tribute to Lord RanganAtha in the pasuram “pacchaimA malai pOl mEni pavazhavAi kamala ce~NkaN acutA! amarar ErE! Ayar tam kozhuntE! ennum icchuvai tavira yAn pOi Intira lOkam ALum acchuvai perinum vENDEn ara~NgamA nakaruLAnE” (There can be nothing more enjoyable for me than rendering the glory of Lord Ranganatha through His numerous names. Is His overlordship restricted only to the nitya suris in Srivaikuntam? Most definitely not. He exuded the same affection for the illiterate folks of Gokulam as their Lord.) Svami NammAzhvar declares in the pasuram “Ican vAnavarkku enpan enRAl atu tEcamO tiruvE~nkaDattanukku nIcanEn niRaivonRumilEn en kaN pAcam vaitta para~ncuDar cotikkE” that the glory of Lord Srinivasa is not so much that He is the chief of the nitya suris. Instead, it lies in the fact that He, who is the light of lights, graces an individual like me. Therefore, Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa should be rendered at the Venktam hill. Svami Desikan follows the lead of the Azhvar in that he seeks from Lord Srinivasa of such magnificence the bhAgyam of rendering Kaimkaryam at Tiruvenkatam hill itself, where he can experience the bliss of rendering nitya kaimkaryam at Srivaikuntam. The usage “baddhAdaraH” in this Daya Satakam verse reflects the fact that the manner of welcoming kaimkaryam should not be like the “jaraganDi” mode of darsanam made available to bhaktas in the present day. Instead, it should be in the manner of slowly and systematically enjoying every little act of Kaimkaryam in a leisurely fashion. The salutation “ataH paraM kimapi me tvayi nAthanIyaM” from this verse indicates that it is Daya Devi’s responsibility to ensure that his request is fulfilled by Lord Srinivasa.



The tribute "tathA mayi prasAdam kuruShva" reflects the fact that is all Svami Desikan seeks from Daya Devi. Thus, Svami Desikan seeks Daya Devi's intervention with Lord Srinivasa to ensure that he begets the same bliss of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam, which prevails in Srivaikuntam, at the Tiruvenkatam hill itself. He desires nothing else. The tribute "tvayi nAthanIyaM" suggests that Svami Desikan has performed moksha prapatti, prayashcitta prapatti, and in addition submitted the prapatti for destruction of pApArambaka pApam. Therefore, all he seeks now is the bliss of Kaimkaryam. The bliss of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam is extremely sweet containing in it the flavor of milk, sugar, and honey. This is the only benefit that Svami Desikan desires to experience in lIlA vibhuti itself. Svami Desikan echoes a similar sentiment in the VaradarAja PancAshat salutation "tvaM cet prasIdasi tavAsmi samIpatashcet tvayyasti bhaktiranaghA karishailanAtha samsR^ijyate yadi ca dAsajanastvadIyaH samsAra eSha bhagavan apavarga eva" ("If I have the benefit of Your grace and You are pleased with me, I will be in close proximity to You. Additionally, if I am blessed with untainted bhakti to You, and have the company of BhAgavatas engaged in Kaimkaryam for You, this Samsaram itself becomes moksham". The import of this verse is that if one is blessed with the grace of Lord Narayana, with the Lord being pleased with the individual, and is conferred with the bhAgyam of being in close proximity to Lord Narayana, possessing blemishless bhakti and has for company BhAgavatas who take delight in rendering Kaimkaryam to Lord Narayana, the anubhavam is identical to that gained in Srivaikuntam upon getting Moksham. In such an instance, samsAram itself confers the anubhavam of Moksham.) In the Daya Satakam verse too the prayerful submission is for Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill and for the experience of paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam. For common folks like us, the darsanam of Lord Srinivasa at the Venkatam hill even for a moment causes goosebumps. This leaves us speechless even though we may have made a prior resolve to seek a large list of blessings.


santanyamAnamaparAdha
gaNaM vicintya

However, the aura and majesty of Lord Srinivasa is overwhelming in that it causes us to completely forget this list and instead focus only on offering prostrations to Him. While this is the condition of one who is blessed with a momentary darsanam of Lord Srinivasa, one can only imagine the delight gained from constantly being in His presence rendering Kaimkaryam. This is the benefit that Svami Desikan intensely desires. Thus, Svami Desikan's appeal in this Daya Satakam verse wherein he states that "he desires nothing more than this benefit" seems to indicate that this may be a trivial matter. However, it is not so. The appeal is for unrestricted right to Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa at all times. This is no ordinary request. We need not examine this request in the context of present-day crowds that throng to the Venkatam hill for a fleeting darsanam of Lord Srinivasa. Even during the times of Svami Desikan, Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa was no mean feat. Mahans like AnanthAzhvan and others have rendered tireless Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa. It must also be remembered that Svami Desikan is no different from Lord Srinivasa Himself. This verse is an outpouring of the GhantAvataram of Lord Srinivasa for illustrating the ultimate puruShArtham for commoners like us. Thus, Svami Desikan submits the appeal for this ultimate puruShArtham to Daya Devi and specifically asks Her to intercede on his behalf with Her consort, Lord Srinivasa. This is called "Sri Parisu" colloquially referred to as "siparisu". Thus, after the initial ten verses Svami Desikan devoted ninety magnificent verses to glorify Daya Devi and her numerous upakarams in many ways. Therefore, even the ultimate puruShArtham when requested of Daya Devi is surely conferred as eloquently stated by Svami Desikan. Daya Devi has the role of the Mother of the Universe. Hence, She has the ability and responsibility of protecting Her helpless children caught in the swirl of Samsaram. This is the import of the tribute "mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam" (Besides You who else can I seek this benefit from? You are the only one that can pave the way for this benefit to accrue to me.) In a home, it is only the mother that instructs the children in what is good and bad for them. Also, when the children need something, they can approach their mother without hesitation to ask her for this. Thus, it is instructive to note Svami Desikan's address of Daya Devi in this context through the "mAtardaye mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam" (This is what I desire. By Your grace, You need to ensure that I get it. Even though I may be replete with faults, I belong to You. I have therefore become privy to Your unalloyed vAtsalyam - the love of a cow for its newborn calf. Consequently, yYou must ignore all my faults and bestow Your munificent blessing upon me." The blessing in this instance is the bhoga pradhAnam - that which brings great joy. In this instance that which brings great joy to Svami Desikan is the paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam in

Srivaikuntam. Svami Desikan desires to experience this at the Venkatam hill itself through uninterrupted Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa). The “iha dAsyati” tribute from this verse is indicative of the fact that Svami Desikan requests Daya Devi to grant him the bliss of Kaimkaryam at the Venkatam hill in the same manner as the Lord confers paripUrNa Brahma anubhavam at Srivaikuntam. Svami Desikan further submits that if Daya Devi is truly pleased with the offering of his stotram, She should grant him this benefit. In the Ramayanam, SItA Devi declares “puruShavyAghraM tAtha kuru dayA mayi” (SItA Devi merely desires to be rescued by Lord Rama without regard to how He carries out this task. Here She submits to Hanuman to pave the way for this). Svami Desikan too submits his appeal in the same spirit as SItA Devi in that he is oblivious to the process by which his request is granted. However, the important thing is that Daya Devi must facilitate the granting of his request by interceding on his behalf with Lord Srinivasa. The considerations of whether or not he is deserving of this benefit, or whether he possesses the requisite characteristics to engage in the nitya kaimkaryam are immaterial. The implication here is that if there is any deficiency in him, Daya Devi should remove this and render him fit for Kaimkaryam to Lord Srinivasa. On the other hand, if he is deemed fit for engaging in Kaimkaryam for Lord Srinivasa, he should be granted his request. This is the import of the tribute “mayi kuruShva tathA prasAdam”. Thus, Svami Desikan closely follows the lead of SItA Devi from the Ramayanam salutation in submitting his appeal to Daya Devi. He further qualifies the appeal by noting that Daya Devi alone can grant this request through Her appeal to Lord Srinivasa on his behalf. Thus, Svami Desikan desires this most lofty benefit and nothing else. This tribute must inspire us to seek the same benefit as eloquently outlined by Svami Desikan. For us to gain this, it is sufficient if we offer prayers to develop unalloyed bhakti to Svami Desikan and seek the bhAgyam of uninterrupted Kaimkaryam for Svami Desikan. Additionally, we need to seek the blessing of learning Svami Desikan’s Sri Suktis, enjoying them and propagating them. This prayer can be granted by Svami Desikan alone and no one else. Thus, adiyen with a prayerful submission of such a request to Svami Desikan, Daya Devi, and Lord Srinivasa, concludes the exposition of this verse from the Daya Satakam.”

We then quote the anubhavam of Sri. U.Ve. Shaili Patrachariar Svamin:

“In this last verse formally glorifying Daya Devi in this stotram, Svami Desikan assertively declares “na ataH param” to denote nothing hereafter.

The essence of the verse is that Svami Desikan seeks nothing more from Daya Devi for enjoyment.


Un aDikkeezh amarntu pukuntEnE!

Oh! Mother Daya Devi! Please bless me such that Lord Srinivasa, who has taken root at the Vrushadri hill on account of a fancy, a love, an attachment, who grants bhukti and mukti as well, in a manner of highly favorable boon to devotees, grant me the beatitude that will in every respect be equivalent to the bliss of Moksham. The mental delectation of the Lord in this location in these precincts, which I have had, should continue until I attain Sri Vaikuntam.

Svami Desikan's mental beatitude with Lord Srinivasa since He is in Tirumalai is one of bhoga-mAtra-sAmyam. As a consequence, this verse is an outpouring from this beatitude. Svami Desikan craves for this benefit eternally as long as he is in this world."

